NAVAL LADS AND LASSIES

WILLIAM HENRY WINSLOW

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IN

WAR WITH DIXIE

BY

WILLIAM HENRY WINSLOW

AUTHOR OF "CRUISING AND BLOCKADING," "THE SEA LETTER," "SOUTHERN BUDS," ETC.

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THE C. M. CLARK PUBLISHING CO.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

1911

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Boston, Massachusetts.

AHOY! AHOY!

To the loyal and patriotic people of the Union, I dedicate this true story of naval life as it was in the sixties, believing its pictures embalm the old navy, and usher in the new; glorify wooden ships and true sailors, and introduce ironclad batteries and expert machinists.

The kith and kin of the lads of the Civil War should know how they lived and fought and made history; and how the lassies helped the heroes in battle, hospital and society, and "loved them for the dangers they had passed."

THE AUTHOR.

Roxbury, Mass.

NAVAL LADS AND LASSIES

IN

WAR WITH DIXIE

CHAPTER I

"Build me straight, O worthy master,
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,—"

The morning railroad train on the C. & A. swayed and plunged through Jersey and approached Camden with a wheezy whistle, and passengers gathered their wraps and valises about them. Two young gentlemen arose and one of them remarked, "She goes smoother than she did a little way back."

"Yes, that is because she is off the track," replied his companion, as he took a sword and cape from a rack and put them in his seat.

The first mentioned laughed cheerily and added, "It is the heaviest swell I've been in since practice cruise on the old Plymouth."

The semi-uniforms, sword, and remarks indicated that the travelers were naval officers. They stood in the crowd upon the forward deck of the ferry-boat and gazed anxiously down the Delaware River.

"There is the Nautilus at the first pier beyond the ship-house," said the older man. "Commodore Paulding said she would be ready for sea within a month, but the trial trips for the engines are not finished, and I think we will have a jolly winter here."

"Perhaps. Have you many acquaintances in Philadelphia, Lieutenant Careswell? They say it is more difficult to get into society here than to boxhaul a ship off from a lee shore."

"Not if you belong to a distinguished family, or are in the Army or Navy. I know a few people on

> "'Market, Arch, Race and Vine,
> Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine.'"

"That is the whole Quaker settlement," declared Ensign Ashton, laughing and pulling his thin, black mustache.

"Only the old part, my lad; the suburbs house

many of the best families. Wissahickon, Germantown, Frankford and Lansdown are beautiful with hedges, lawns, trees and villas. I am going to Commodore Maple's, out Green Street, to dine with Lieutenant-Commander McNary, his son-in-law; there are other buds besides Mrs. Mac. Come along with me, Ashton; naval officers are always welcome there and you knew Mac at the Academy."

"Thanks, awfully; I will decide the matter after luncheon."

The ferry-boat nosed into her slip and a cab took these naval sprigs to the Girard House, which disputed patronage with the new Continental across the street.

The war for the preservation of the Union had gone on over two years with varying fortunes on each side. The Quaker City was full of strange faces and uniforms. The drum and fife were heard in all the streets. Soldiers were marching hither and thither. The Cooper Shop Refreshment Saloon was daily besieged by carloads of soldiers, who stopped only long enough to satisfy hunger and thirst and hurried to the front. The jokes, laughter, cheers, martial music and lively flirtations of the rollicking

soldiers *en route* to the battlefields, contrasted harshly with the tearful leave-takings of children and women from men under marching orders. Strong men shook hands and parted in silence, unable to speak from emotion; or talked and laughed boisterously to restrain unmanly tears.

The bulletin boards at the newspaper offices were surrounded by crowds eager for the latest war news; newsboys shouted late editions with reports of battles, and ladies with parcels and baskets flitted about the hospitals, ministering to wounded or sick soldiers. Everyone talked of war, read about battles, dreamed of desperate adventures, and walked the streets with shoulders thrown back and feet keeping time with the taps of the drum.

Women scraped lint, rolled bandages, made haversacks and sewing-cases and packed boxes of goodies for the boys in blue, while others were busy ministering in the hospitals, running charity bazaars and collecting clothes for runaway slaves. Children forsook their tamer toys, donned cocked-hats, and strutted around with mimic swords and wooden guns. Never before did a Christian people lay down the arts of

peace, and become so thoroughly and quickly enthralled by martial enthusiasm.

Philadelphia conditions were typical of those in all the towns and cities of the North, and hordes of youthful men rushed to the recruiting stations and enlisted in the army or navy.

Careswell and Ashton were received cordially about five o'clock at Maple's by Mrs. Maple and her four daughters, whose yellow-brown hair and fresh pink and white complexions reminded Careswell of a bunch of peach blossoms, although Ashton, inclined to be cynical, said in the privacy of the hotel, "carroty."

The girls were pretty, graceful and vivacious, and compensated for the absence of the commodore, who was sleeping off a night's banquet on a bench in the garden, and was not presentable nor amiable. McNary came in soon and apologized for not being present when his guests had arrived, saying, "It was a long ride by horse-car from the navy yard."

"Mighty glad to see you, Careswell, and you too, Ashton. Let me think. I was professor of the geography class at Annapolis, when you were a fourth classman, Ashton, and now you are up to ensign. How time flies. Well, a few more

gold bands on your sleeves, a wife, some children, and you'll be killed in battle, dismissed for misconduct, or warped and crippled by gout. The last is the usual fate of a retired officer."

Every one laughed over this queer horoscope and Ashton replied, "O, you taught us geography well enough, but we had a better man for astronomy."

"How many bands does the navy expect on the sleeve before an officer marries?" asked Mrs. Maple simpering. She knew an ensign's pay was $1,200 a year.

"Two at least, though the girl's ambition may demand more. Careswell has crossed the Rubicon, but he is so engrossed in the science of gunnery, he has little thought of the saner problems of life."

Mrs. Maple and the girls looked at Careswell's golden insignia of rank and he blushed with apprehension, but dinner was announced and the subject dropped. He was a sensitive, modest man, and spent more time over his books than was conducive to his physical health.

"You fellows are going into the fight now, I suppose. You have had a long spell of shore duty at the New York yard, Careswell, and that

new primer you have invented will do wonders in real warfare," remarked McNary.

"I hope so; it has passed many trials successfully," replied Careswell modestly.

Ashton became all attention at once and asked some pointed questions, which were answered evasively.

"We must all be busy these times," said Mrs. Maple; "Lillian has all of the girls engaged in sewing for the soldiers, visiting the hospitals, and providing for the slaves, who are coming in hordes from the South. We have defied the Dred Scott decision, and forwarded many runaway negroes by underground railroad across the St. Lawrence to freedom."

"You ought all to be in jail. We are in a nest of patriotic conspirators," added McNary; "I can hardly get my wife to sew on a button."

"You are so hard on buttons, dear; I will be obliged soon to use rope-yarn or marline to fasten them."

"All right; I'll get you a marlinespike when you wish."

"What nautical talk," commented Evaline.

"It's better than naughty talk."

"Well, we leave that to men."

"I fear I'll use some soon, if our Southern friends continue to boast over their victories, and our copperhead journals commend them for every additional treason. Worden and Green are sneered at for doing their duty on the little Monitor, while Buchanan is made a demigod because he broke his leg behind a pile of iron on the Merrimac. The former ought to be made commodores. Then, what did Cushing get for the most heroic deed of any man? A little advancement in grade. No wonder he drinks."

"It is shameful the way the department treats naval officers," said Mrs. Maple. "Promotion is much more rapid in the army. The commodore is disgusted at the way his claims for command are ignored, and he calls the secretary a chimpanzee."

"He has had his hair cut to make him look fierce. There isn't any fight in him except over expense accounts," said Ashton.

"Be careful, or you'll never get the thanks of Congress," remarked Mac.

"What do they amount to? A privilege of more hard work after long years of dangerous service, when one ought to begin to play."

"Patriotic, isn't he?" commented Careswell.

"Yes, and now they expect us to free the niggers for the abolitionists of New England. I am getting tired. I wish I could make a living at some other business. McClellan would not advance the army to favor the fanatics, hoping a compromise might result and avert the war and save his Southern friends from poverty by loss of slaves, but the John Brown furor was too strong among the people, and he was superseded. He ought to have been hung all the same. His friends wish to elect him President. Then we would have a pretty howdy-do."

"The lad has some ideas, hasn't he? He had better keep mum, or the bands will not increase fast on his sleeves," observed Mac.

"The slaves have been emancipated, but the South will not acknowledge the fact. We may conquer the Confederacy, restore the authority of the Government, and have a *quasi* peace between the warring sections; but years will not smother the feelings of injustice and hatred of Northern people in Southern hearts," remarked Careswell quietly.

"Well, let them remain there. They were contented when they held the balance of power in Congress, but when the North gained it, they

substituted bullets for ballots. The under dog never likes it," said Mac.

"Do you know why the South is like Lazarus?" asked Jean, the younger, boldly interrupting the conversation.

"No, my dear; why?" asked Mrs. Mac.

"Because she is licked by dogs."

"Why Jean! that is horrid! I am surprised!"

The gentlemen roared and asked Jean where she picked up that gem.

"I got it from a Georgia soldier in the Cherry Street Hospital, and I slapped his face although he has one leg amputated."

"Served him right. Do it again," said Ashton.

"No, but he will not get any more jelly, turnovers, cakes and oranges from my basket. I'm not going to have my friends and relatives called dogs by a smooth-tongued rebel."

"Bravo! little girl. I would rather be a dog than Lazarus in this affair," said Mac.

Political questions and party antagonisms were rarely discussed by naval officers, because they were servants of the Government, and were expected to obey the commands of Congress issued through the Navy Department. But the

leaven was working; abolition sentiment prevailed in most social circles, and officers formed convictions, which relegated them to undesirable positions or desirable ones, according to their opinions against or for emancipation. Ashton was a Marylander and approved of slavery. He could not favor measures which injured his own patrimony.

Careswell was a product of New England from a family which had stood close to the King of England in Colonial times, but had changed in opinions with the colonies and states. He had fighting ancestors in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. At no time from Jamestown to the Rebellion had the army and navy not had some of his relatives bearing arms. Of course, he was patriotic and full of enthusiastic approval of the war for suppressing the rebellion and preserving the Union.

CHAPTER II.

"A goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster."

CARESWELL visited the navy yard at the foot of Federal Street the next morning, and attempted to pass the sentinel.

"You cannot enter without a pass," said the sentinel brusquely.

Careswell unbuttoned his light civilian overcoat, uncovered his uniform, and said, "I wish to see the Nautilus and report to the commodore."

The sentinel's brow cleared at the sight of the golden-anchor buttons, and he stood aside and saluted, saying, "I thought you might be a blasted English spy."

The commodore endorsed Careswell's orders to the U. S. S. Nautilus, said the ship was not ready for her crew yet, and gave him shore leave.

The yard was thronged by busy workmen, fitting out gunboats, sloops-of-war, and ironclads for sea service. Cannon, with and without carriages, were mingled with piles of solid shot and unfilled shells; timbers, ropes, anchors, chains, water-casks and food supplies, obstructed the roads and covered the wharves. The ship-houses were full of monster vessels in various stages of construction. Merchant ships, redolent of the spices of India, were having gun-ports made through the bulwarks. Light-draft gunboats were receiving finishing touches from riggers and painters.

The old Receiving-ship Princeton lay at anchor a little way out in the river, her decks crowded with men, as if quietly surveying the scene with the feelings of an old pensioner whose fighting days were past. A bark-rigged sloop-of-war, taking in stores at the dock, was the Nautilus, and Careswell inspected her alow and aloft with a feeling of exultation that she was to be his next ship. He stood at last looking down upon the ponderous machinery of the engine-room and remarked to a gentleman opposite to him, "Powerful engines, those, sir."

"Yes, the largest I have seen," was the reply.

"The ship is a beauty, but I shouldn't like to do duty down there."

"No? Well, I must, as I am a third assistant engineer ordered to her."

"Indeed? I am glad to know you, sir," and the two men exchanged cards. Careswell read, "Richard Dayton, Brooklyn, N. Y."

"You go in the wardroom, I suppose?" said Dayton, glancing at the gold bands on Careswell's sleeves.

"Yes, but I would like the steerage as well. You find true democracy there, and can say and do pretty much what you please. The executive officer keeps an eye on you in the wardroom."

"So? This is my first cruise."

"It will be my fourth."

"You ought to know all about the sea. You are a graduate of the Naval Academy, I presume?"

"Of course—and you?"

"Of the Polytechnic, at Troy."

"Phew! What induces you to go out as a steam engineer?"

"Patriotism, and a desire to help my country in her time of need."

Careswell smiled, but quiet, brown eyes looked

calmly into his, and he became grave immediately. He approved of patriotism, of course. He had been bred to arms and was in the line of promotion. Patriotism was easy for him. Here was a man, educated in civil engineering, with a promising future, going out on unremunerative, disagreeable and dangerous service for love of country. He held out his hand and said, "My dear sir, I am glad to know you. I am sure we shall be friends whether bunked in steerage or wardroom. I know many engineers, and I have great respect for their acquirements and their profession. We shall soon meet again on board this beautiful craft; good-by."

"Good-by, sir; I will be glad to renew our acquaintance," responded Dayton, shaking the proffered hand.

A few days after this meeting, the Nautilus was towed away from the dock and anchored in the channel, and the officers were notified by the commodore of the yard to be on board before meridian, Wednesday, as the ship was then going into commission. Careswell came early with his luggage, and was taken on board in a cutter from the Princeton. He had a fine view of his future home, as he moved rapidly over the Delaware,

and was proud at the thought of being an officer of such a noble ship.

The hull was constructed of white oak and hard pine, fastened by the best Pittsburg iron, and shaped by the naval constructor according to plans furnished by the Naval Bureau at Washington. The seams were well caulked to resist the searching currents of the sea; the bow and stern had the harmonious curves of a clipper, and the spars were tapered like a lady's finger. The shrouds, stays, lifts and running rigging shone in the morning sunlight like a gossamer web on dewy grass.

Several boats hung at their davits, and several floated at the swinging booms. Steps at the starboard gangway, covered with canvas, showed white against the shiny black hull, and many men upon the deck indicated that the ship's crew had been already transferred from the receiving-ship.

Careswell mounted the gangway, stepped down upon the deck, touched his cap to a group of officers, and, seeking the executive officer, Lieutenant-Commander Lawson, said, saluting him, "I am Lieutenant Careswell, and I report for duty, sir. Commodore Paulding told me this

was a regular man-of-war, fitted out in the best manner, and going on special service, and I preferred her to a made-over merchantman."

"I am glad to see you, sir. I know several of your family in the service, and I have no doubt you will give a good account of yourself," replied the executive, shaking hands cordially. Careswell bowed and saluted, had his baggage put in his room, and went to look over the ship.

There was a battery of 56-pounder broadside guns on each side of the spar-deck, with brass 24-pounder howitzers at each end. Cutlasses and boarding-pikes were arranged in symmetrical figures on the bulwarks above the cannon, and snugly-lashed hammocks in the nettings made a white ruffle along the rail. A 200-pounder Parrot gun rested upon its pivoted carriage behind the foremast, and an 11-inch Dahlgren, on pivot, filled the space abaft the mizzenmast. Hatches, ventilators, skylights, and the smoke-stack occupied the remainder of the deck, and the bridge crossed high from bulwark to bulwark in front of the stack. The forecastle deck was surmounted by a pivoted 30-pounder Parrot, and the space beneath the deck contained lockers, capstan, chain-stoppers, and ranges of chain-

cable. The little midshipman's deck across the stern had a pivoted 30-pounder Parrot, and the quartermaster on watch, with spyglass in hand, walked around it on the lookout for shore and ship signals, and the general movements of boats and vessels. Life-buoys, with pyrotechnics, hung near-by, to be lighted and dropped overboard at the pulling of a lock-string.

There was a well under this deck, with hoisting gear to lift the screw, when the sails were used. The spaces on each side had ports opening astern and lockers for flags, signal-lights, rockets, log-lines, spyglasses, and other treasures of the quartermasters. The officers used the port side for a smoking, story-telling rendezvous. A double steering wheel, covered by a tarpaulin, having the United States coat-of-arms, and "U. S. S. Nautilus," painted on its face, was forward of the well and abaft a fine mahogany binnacle with compasses and lamps.

The captain's cabin filled the stern below; the wardroom, home of the higher officers, and their staterooms, came next; and the country passage, with the engineers' and the midshipmen's steerages on either side, continued to the engine-room. The hold beneath this main deck contained sup-

plies of clothing and some ammunition for the after howitzers.

The great engines, boilers and fire-room occupied the middle of the ship; the sailors' 'tween-decks on the main deck forward extended beyond the foremast, and various rooms on the side and forward were allotted to the warrant officers, the apothecary, the cooks, and the yeoman. The great galley for cooking was here, surrounded at night by hammocks (sleeping-bags) slung to the deck beams, and one part held swinging cots for the sick-bay. The hammocks were lashed and stowed along the rail during the day, and square mess-cloths were spread at meal time upon the white deck, where the men ate from wooden bowls and tin dishes.

In the angular peak of the bow, separated from 'tween-decks by a slat partition, was the brig for the confinement of prisoners. The hold below the main deck was filled with ship stores, ammunition and chain cables.

The ship was complete and beautiful from kelson to truck, from jib-boom to taffrail, and the hardy sailors and gallant officers, who covered her spar-deck this bright day in October, were evidence that great deeds were expected of her

by the Navy Department. The old navy had many such vessels, and their comfort and safety are remembered by veterans of the old régime.

Careswell finished his inspection and reached the group of officers upon the starboard side of the quarter-deck, where he saw Ashton. "Hello! young fellow; where have you been cruising during the past week?"

"Out at Valley Forge with my aunt in the old stone mansion, where General Washington had his headquarters during the dreadful winter of 1777. Some of the fortifications are still visible."

"Very interesting, no doubt. The Maples have been daily inquiring for you, especially Jean, who says, 'Mr. Ashton's eyes are beautiful and wicked.'"

"The baby! She's the choice of the bunch though."

"She's cunning, and will be older after the war. I guess the commodore is on the shelf. He has been working the Department through Congressmen to get a command, but the secretary will not give him anything except shore duty."

"Well, it is time these old fossils were put

on the retired list to make places for younger officers. How is your primer taking?"

"Fine. Luce is testing it now. Foreign attachés are quite curious. I need not warn you to be cautious. Lieutenant Kilgore, of H. M. S. Curacoa was inquiring for you at the yard. You remember, we were his good friends when his ship was at Annapolis with Lord Lyons, the British Minister; and he returned our courtesies on our practice cruise in the Plymouth, when we visited old Plymouth, England, and he banqueted us on roast beef and plum pudding."

"O, I recall the chap. Good stock and a lover of good dinners. I will be glad to meet him again."

The conversation was interrupted here by orders to the officers to muster with side-arms on the starboard quarter-deck, and they rushed below, put on long coats and their swords and assembled in line just abaft the mizzenmast.

CHAPTER III.

"The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we."

CAPTAIN PRESTON came up from his cabin, returned the salutes of his crew, and said, "Mister Lawson, you may muster the crew in the port waist, the marines on the port quarter-deck, and the officers upon the starboard quarter-deck, and have the quartermaster get the colors ready to put the ship in commission."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the officer, and he gave the necessary orders to the boatswain and the quartermaster. The boatswain's shrill whistle sounded and he shouted, "All hands muster aft on the port side!" The boatswain's mates repeated the whistling and order; the marines formed a line on the port quarter-deck; the sailors gathered near the mainmast, and the officers, uniformed and wearing their swords, lined up on the starboard quarter-deck. Pay-

master Hunting was ordered to muster the crew, and his clerk called the names of all the men and officers, each one answering, "Here, sir."

The enlisted men were of several nationalities and from all classes of society. They had joined the navy from various and mixed motives. They desired to be patriotic, to gain promotion, to meet adventures, to see the world, to obtain a livelihood, to drown grief, to escape persecution, to avoid punishment for lawlessness, or to gratify the restless energy of youth. Many of them were in their teens, and a large majority under twenty-five years of age. The names were often assumed, and the executive designated each man by a number. Sam Patch, Davy Crockett, Dan Rice, George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte and Timothy Ticklepitcher were jolly messmates, and ate their food from the same kids.

The clerk finished the roll-call and reported "all present" to the paymaster, the latter reported the same to the executive, who reported to the captain, each ceremoniously saluting in turn. Captain Preston said to Mister Lawson, "Hoist the colors, sir!" As they were run up and broken out by the quartermasters already appointed, he addressed the crew:

"Officers and men of the Nautilus:—I take command of this beautiful ship with pleasure. No finer or better equipped vessel sails the seas. I expect great deeds from my sturdy crew and gallant officers. Naval discipline must be maintained from stem to stern. Those who do their duty will find me a kind and indulgent commander. The part of the humblest among you is essential to the welfare of all, and it is only by each man doing his whole duty that perfect work can be accomplished. Let us then pull together, each in his appointed place, in order that we may make a name and fame for the good ship Nautilus. Now, by the power vested in me by the Navy Department, at Washington, I declare the United States ship Nautilus in commission."

The long naval pennant had reached the maintruck and floated upon the breeze, and the starry ensign curled and waved in the bright sunlight at the end of the spanker gaff. Mr. Lawson sprang upon the after steps and shouted, "Three cheers for the good ship Nautilus and her gallant captain!"

Loud hurrahs went over the water from more than four hundred men, echoed around the great

ship-houses of the navy yard, stopped the mechanics momentarily from their labor, and started the band upon the wharf to playing "The Star Spangled Banner." The music of the national anthem came on the breeze like the sounds of an æolian harp, and caused eyes to shine brighter and hearts to beat faster for country.

"Pipe Down!" ordered the executive. The boatswain's whistles sounded, the men scattered, the marines broke ranks, the officers took off their swords and went below deck, and Lawson proceeded to organize the ship's company. He had already made out his "Watch, Quarter and Station Bill," and given each man his number. The men were divided into port and starboard watches; the petty officers were sent to their duty; the warrant officers were instructed to take charge of their departments, and the deck officers were assigned. The officers off duty unpacked and arranged things in their quarters, and introductions, courtesies and jokes soon established a brotherly feeling in steerages and wardroom.

It was rumored the Nautilus was to be flagship of a fleet and have a commodore, and great were the anticipations of social festivities. The nine

officers of the wardroom mess were honored by the captain at dinner, and the viands and the wines established cordial relations. The steerages had equally pleasant conviviality to judge by the sounds of laughter that came from the bulkheads. The boatswain, gunner, sailmaker and carpenter dined in their room at the forward part of the main deck, and the marines and sailors spread their square mess-cloths upon the main deck, where the biting air was tempered by the galley fire; and, sitting cross-legged by their wooden kids and tin dishes, began those yarns for which they have long been famous.

Every day at 9 A. M. the drum and fife called to quarters, and the ship's company was drilled in maneuvering the ship, handling the guns and practicing with broadswords, pikes and muskets. Each man knew his number, position, and duties; each officer had his place and a particular routine to follow with the men, and everything went like clockwork, or in man-of-war fashion.

McNary had Ashton up to Maples to dinner one afternoon, and Mrs. Mac and her three sisters accompanied the gentlemen to the navy yard to see the ship that was to be their home for many months. The cutter proceeded with dif-

ficulty over the icy river, great masses of ice moved down the current and gnawed the vessel's bow, and a marine of the Monongahela had been drowned in attempting to desert to the shore by jumping from cake to cake. However, the party forgot the danger in meeting Careswell on the deck of the Nautilus, where they became the cynosure of many naughty, nautical eyes.

"Your progress through the ice-field was like Washington crossing the Delaware," he remarked, after the cordial greeting.

"Rather a rough passage, but we had good navigators," replied Mrs. Mac.

The ladies went over the ship, awed by great guns and confused by the marine paraphernalia.

"How do you keep the ship so clean and natty?" asked Lillian, in surprise at white decks, bright brass work and snugly coiled ropes.

"We have several hundred men to do the work," replied Ashton. "The engineers take care of the fire-room and engines; the gunner is responsible for the condition of the battery; the boatswain gets the hull, rigging and sails shipshape; the quartermaster handles the signals and

flags, and the officer-of-the-deck orders and oversees everything."

"He must know a heap," commented Jean; "but the cooks don't know how to make molasses brittle nor fudge. I've been telling them how."

"Uncle Sam does not furnish luxuries," said Mrs. Mac, "but, if the brasses soil a clean, white handkerchief, when it is rubbed over them, the boys have to ride the spanker-boom an hour or two."

"Poor fellows! what tyranny!"

His majesty, the captain, being on shore, the party saw his staterooms and living room and passed forward to the wardroom. The girls' chatter and the swish of skirts hurried several officers to their rooms, and the ladies commented on the swinging racks and lamps, the camp-stools and the pantry fittings, as they nibbled hardtack and sipped sherry at the long table. Then Mac and Ashton exhibited their state-rooms, bric-à-brac, pictures and curios to the delighted girls, who declared they wished they could sail over the world in such cosy quarters.

Perhaps it should not be mentioned, that Ashton kissed Jean behind his portière without protest, when the others were instructing Mac how

he should arrange his clothes in the drawers beneath his bunk.

The ladies were landed safely at the navy yard and disappeared near the great ship-house in a flutter of handkerchiefs, with Jean in the rear, swinging her tam-o'-shanter violently in the wintry breeze.

The Nautilus was soon ready for sea; the sailing day was appointed; farewell visits were made on shore; all private stores and knicknacks were stowed; the watercasks, guns, anchors and boats were securely lashed, and the noble ship under a full head of steam commenced her voyage southward, with Careswell upon the bridge, taking the forenoon watch, as officer-of-the-deck. Circumstances over which he had little control were shaping his career, although he built castles in the gray clouds that were tumbling up from the southwest, which never had a more substantial foundation than those vaporous images.

CHAPTER IV.

"Why plead with the deaf for the cause of mankind?
The owl hoots at noon that the eagle is blind.
* * * * *
The mower mows on, though the adder may writhe
And the copper head coil round the blade of his scythe."

THE ship was slipping down the coast next morning under all sail, and the screw was hoisted up in the well. Mr. Howard, a blonde man, healthy and genial, had the morning watch, and, although he had been served with the usual mug of coffee and two hardtacks, at four bells, his unappeased appetite hurried him to breakfast, as soon as he was relieved by his successor. He was rushing down the steps, when the ship lurched and he plunged into the middle of the wardroom. A roar of laughter went around the breakfast table, but Lawson looked grave and said, "I hope you are not hurt, Mr. Howard."

"No, thank you; I only came down on the run," he replied.

"You'd better have a care, the surgeon hasn't yet unpacked his splints," remarked Ensign Ashton.

The victim of the *faux pas* rubbed his elbow and said, "If any of you thin staff officers want to get an appetite, go on deck half an hour. The wind is coming off the shore in elegant puffs, and I could smell old Virginia like a bouquet." After this speech, Howard took his place at the table, and his negro servant brought him his breakfast hot from the galley.

"How many knots are we making this morning, Howard?" asked Phillis, the chief engineer.

"About nine; no hurry, I suppose, or we would use the engines."

"I can do better than that. We'll get twelve knots with the screw alone. The trial trips in the Delaware showed that speed. We are in a hurry, but we cannot use the engines much because the valves are cutting."

"There's always something wrong below deck. I prefer sails to steam, with a contract engine."

"I wonder where we are bound?" said Lieutenant Rockett, glancing inquiringly at Lawson.

The latter was studying a chart of the West Indies. "The captain has sealed orders. They will be opened when we arrive off Cape Henlopen," he replied quietly.

"I hope we shall have a roving commission," remarked Lieutenant Bloss, the fat, jolly member of the mess. "I would like to get a shot with our heavy Parrot gun at those Confederate pirates that are burning our merchantmen. My brother lost his ship near Bermuda on her return voyage from Brazil. The villains looted and burned her, and the crew in two boats arrived at Hamilton after much suffering."

"What vessel captured her?" asked Howard.

"I believe it was the Florida. The Kearsarge and the Vanderbilt are hot after the Alabama."

"Those Confederate cruisers and the blockade-runners have the best engines in the world," said Phillis. "It is astonishing what work they can do month after month with little damage or repairs. It's mortifying to chase a Clyde-built craft. They run away from our fastest steamers and get hull down in a few hours."

"What do the politicians, who rule our destinies, know about the necessities of a navy? They come from farms, warehouses and law offices.

The Honorable Secretary asked an officer of the New York navy yard where oakum grew," sneered Ashton, laughing loudly with his companions.

"You should remember the Secretary is your superior officer," said Lawson gravely.

"I will not forget he is my senior, sir; but I do not acknowledge him as my superior," answered Ashton, biting his lips to keep from laughing.

"Mister Phillis is wanted in the engine-room," said a messenger boy at this moment, and the chief departed. He returned soon and whispered to the executive, who went to see the captain. The officers went on deck to smoke, and learned a condenser pipe had burst, which made it necessary to call at Hampton Roads for repairs. The ship was turned to the westward, and came to anchor in the afternoon off Fort Monroe.

How beautiful the land appeared. The fields and trees held their summer green, though tinged here and there by the brown footsteps of autumn. The fort was silent and threatening; sentinels paced its parapet; the flag of the Union shadowed its parade ground, and black guns frowned on every side. The light-house, the long wharf and

a great gun upon the sandy shore, relieved eyes looking seaward. The unfinished Rip Raps Fort, covered with laborers and soldiers, was in mid-stream; several American and two English war vessels swung at anchor beyond it, and a few small craft were flitting about the Roads. One could see beyond Hampton village upon a wooded bluff, the cabins, tents and wagons of an encampment at Newport News. A steam transport lay at a wharf, silhouted upon the misty left bank of James River. The shore line of the river's right bank could be traced to Elizabeth River, and Norfolk, and along Sewall's Point to dark forests and the open sea.

One could see near the eastern shore of the Roads the charred timbers of the gallantly defended frigate Congress, whose guns and flames were conquered by the sea.

The sloop-of-war Cumberland sank out in deeper water, and her lower masts were visible still above the surface—melancholy monuments of the heroes, who fired her guns until the hungry waves lapped over the decks and swallowed all.

Who can imagine the sorrow and dread of the crews of the other wooden ships, as they witnessed the unequal combat, and saw the ironclad

monster, the Virginia (Merrimac), apparently uninjured, steam back to her Confederate lair at Norfolk, rejoicing in her bloody victory?

But luck did not forsake the defenders of the Union. The cheese-box-on-a-raft, the first turreted, ironclad war vessel in the world, the little Monitor, arrived in the Roads after dark, and, when the Virginia came down river next morning, expecting victory and glory, she was beaten back, crippled and unmanageable. Her skeleton lay upon Craney Island Point, where her gallant and misguided crew had burned and deserted her.

The Gosport navy yard opposite Norfolk was a ruin of charred timbers, piles of rubbish, windowless walls and sunken ships.

Portsmouth and Norfolk were shriveled by war, and abandoned by their able-bodied citizens. United States troops had conquered their defenders, but enmity and treason filled the minds of the inhabitants. Hope was aroused by the thunder of General Longstreet's cannon on Nansemond River. Gunboats came back daily to repair damages from shot and shell; to land wounded men at the Marine Hospital, and to return to the hotly contested river. United States

soldiers were everywhere, patrolling, guarding and bivouacking, expecting an attempt to re-capture Norfolk. War was close at hand, and the Nautilus moored, and trained her guns upon the railroad bridge over the river in order to be ready for any emergency.

Longstreet's desperate attack was repulsed at Suffolk, and, the crisis passed, the crew was given shore liberty. Norfolk was quiet under martial law. Its store windows were filled by gaudy advertisements to hide emptiness. Its few marketmen were openly obsequious and secretly hostile. Gaunt, sallow-faced countrymen, evaders and deserters of military service, loafed about the streets and mingled with the bright-faced, fun-making negroes. Clothing was scarce and ragged, and nearly every one wore some sailor's or soldier's cast-off garment of gray, butternut, or blue color. Jim Crow wore his master's threadbare frock and battered plug hat, and Susannah beamed beneath a faded red bandanna. Union soldiers picketed the city, and commanded respect from even the roustabouts. The women only, the dwellers in houses, with drawn curtains, closed blinds and weedy yards, indicating the absence in the army of the men, were not molli-

fied by the kindness and protection of the general in command. They manifested their hatred of the United States army and navy in various ways.

"The Southerners do not understand our devotion to principle, which mockery and insult cannot change," said Lawson. "They are simply drying up the sympathy, which every Northerner feels for the unfortunate in distress. The politicians and journals of the South give us the blackest characters, in order to restrain the slaves and increase recruiting; and the deluded people will some day learn by experience how much we have been maligned and they deceived.

"General Vielé says, 'The people here have lost many relatives in battle; they are in poverty and despair, and are terribly disappointed at Longstreet's failure to re-capture the city. He has been cognizant of petty insults to officers and men, but he cannot eradicate hostility in children, women and old men, abandoned by their protectors and kindred.'"

CHAPTER V.

"Then, like a kraken huge and black,
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!"

A MORNING watch from four to eight o'clock is full of misery. The decks are washed, holy-stoned, squilgeed and swabbed clean. The rigging is hauled taut and coiled down; the brass-work scoured bright; the sails trimmed or snugged; the guns cleaned; the hammocks stowed in the netting along the rail, and the cooks serve early coffee and hardtack to the men and officers on duty.

The deck-officer growls at subordinate officers; the petty-officers, at the sailors; the sailors, at the boys and servants, and these say cuss-words below their breath and try to soger.

Jack is a growler by nature. His hardships and dangers are little appreciated by the sentimental landsman, who sees a beautiful ship glid-

ing over the sheltered waters of a harbor, or watches her graceful, majestic rise and fall upon the puny billows of the seacoast.

Every one on board the Nautilus was glad when repairs were finished and orders were received to continue the voyage. The anchor was weighed, the fleet passed with the customary cheers, and the gallant ship was soon breasting the billows of the deep sea. The officers smoked beneath the little deck and talked of the Hampton Roads battle. The doctor brought up the Southern Illustrated News, which contained a report from Confederate sources of the first day's fight with the Virginia. Careswell read the article aloud, while the officers smoked and made caustic comments.

"That is a one-sided report, but there are others. It was a gallant fight by both sides," exclaimed Lieutenant Rockett. "It was very natural that random shots should fly around the Congress, during the turmoil of battle and surrender. They came from the soldiers on shore. Buchanan and Parker knew the crew of the Congress were not responsible, yet, they again opened fire upon her wounded heroes."

"The disaster to our fleet was unavoidable. It

was not believed the Confederacy possessed an ironclad that could cope with our powerful ships and heavy guns," remarked Lawson.

"Buchanan hadn't much desire next day to fight the little Monitor," added Rockett; "and I believe his conscience troubled him at thoughts of the slaughter of his former naval comrades. Loyalty to his state led many a good man to fight against the Union, but Buchanan had no such incentive, as neither his native, nor his adopted state seceded."

"No doubt many officers went in haste and now repent at leisure. They thought they were choosing between two nations, when in reality, one is a rebellious section, the other a centralized Union," remarked the doctor, as he threw his cigar stump into the churning waters astern.

"Well, they have really sea-ceded, left the ocean for land service, because the Confederacy has only a few piratical craft and"—Lieutenant Bloss stopped talking and listened.

"Sail ho!" came from the lookout man up in the fore-topmast crosstrees. The group of officers scattered about the deck, listening and watching the horizon.

"Where away?" shouted Ashton, who was officer-of-the-deck.

"One point on the port bow, sir!"

"Very well. Keep a sharp lookout!"

The quartermaster, deck-officer, and executive studied the craft, with her trail of black smoke, and the latter remarked, "It is probably the British mail-steamer from the West Indies."

Careswell took the deck at meridian, made all sail and kept the screw turning. About two bells, he informed Mr. Lawson the steamer had changed her course to the northeast. He changed the Nautilus' course more to the eastward in order to pass near the steamer, which was leaving clouds of bituminous black smoke behind her. The United States flag was hoisted, and the stranger ran up the British ensign.

"She looks something like the Alabama or the Florida," remarked Phillis.

"Where is Howard? He has seen the Florida," said Careswell.

Mr. Lawson and the captain believed the stranger to be the mail-steamer, but Howard was called. He came on deck, rubbing his eyes and looking stupid from his nap, glanced at the steamer, seized a glass and gazed intently, then

exclaimed, "That is the Florida, Captain; I chased her last voyage. Notice the pivot gun hidden beneath the tarpaulin."

The captain's face flushed and he ordered Lawson to make chase with all sail and steam. The executive went upon the bridge and took charge; the boatswain called, "All hands make sail!" The sails were carefully trimmed; the fires were stirred up, and the ship sped twelve knots an hour after the enemy. The course of the Florida was immediately altered to the south-east; her smoke-stack belched great clouds of black smoke, and she slipped over the smooth sea like a flying fish.

The vessels seemed well matched. It was difficult to determine whether the three miles that separated them was decreasing or increasing. It was a stern chase, which is generally a long one, and night would soon afford opportunity to escape.

"Mr. Careswell, take your gun's crew and see if you can reach the chase with the forecastle Parrot," said Mr. Lawson quietly, and he had the boatswain call the crew to quarters.

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the reply, and the 30-

pounder was cast loose, loaded and pointed. "All ready, sir!" said Careswell.

"Give extreme elevation and fire, as the ship falls off a point!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Quartermaster, keep her off one point and steady!"

"Aye, aye, sir! one point off and steady, it is, sir."

Every one watched the gun. A flash, a puff of flame and smoke, and a roar followed, as the shell mounted the sky, curved downwards to the sea, ricochetted prettily, and exploded almost beneath the Florida's stern.

"Well done, sir. Load with the heavy charge and try again!" shouted Lawson through his trumpet.

The interest and excitement were now intense. All watched the steamer and noticed that she altered her course more to the southward. The gun again sent a shell which exploded very near the enemy. The crew cheered; the log gave a speed of thirteen knots.

"You are doing well, sir; load and fire as fast as you can!" shouted Lawson.

The officers had glasses on the Florida. A

puff of flame and smoke came from her stern gun; a shell burst under the bow of the Nautilus, and the Confederate flag replaced the English colors.

"Thank you for your card, Captain Moffit," said Captain Preston, with mock courtesy. "We are glad to know you. Your powder is damp; and your cannon has not the ring of Yankee metal."

The Nautilus was pointed for the Florida during the intervals of firing, and kept off a point, while the gun was discharged. She was making her best speed, with all sails set and a full head of steam. The Florida was going like a bird, leaving a long trail of black smoke in the sky. She fired regularly now, and some shells dashed spray upon the head sails of her pursuer, while the latter's shell burst just behind her, and seemed to push her onward faster. Every one was hopeful of coming to close quarters and having a genuine sea fight, when suddenly there was heard an ominous flapping of the sails and the royals were shaking along their weather luffs. The Nautilus was close-hauled, the wind was changing to the southward, and the square sails would soon be useless. Hope sank, for the

speed of the vessels was about equal, and any shortening of sail would give the Florida the race.

In half an hour, the square sails were lifting and shaking, and they were clewed up and furled. The crew was frantic. Some guns were transported aft, and many men gathered there, in order to keep the stern deep and the screw steady. The engines were driven regardless of steam pressure, but the earlier speed could not be maintained. The Florida drew gradually away from her pursuer; the guns ceased firing and were secured; the Yankee sailors cursed their luck, and Phillis gave a lecture to the wardroom mess on the superiority of English marine engines. When darkness came and hid the far distant ship, there was gloom and bitter wailing throughout the Nautilus.

CHAPTER VI.

"The white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free;
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we."

An easterly course was continued. Stormy Cape Hatteras had been passed in pleasant weather.

"If Cape Lookout lets you pass,
Then look out for Hatteras."

The green hills of Bermuda lifted the third day out of the vast ocean, and the ship lay off and on, while the captain and Careswell visited St. Georges. There were several blockade runners in the harbor, which greeted the United States vessel by hoisting many Confederate flags; and the people of the town were hostile and insulting to her officers. The English colonists sympathized with the South; the Nautilus hovered outside for a day, fearing detention

or treachery within the harbor, and then sailed away to the southwest.

Careswell had said to his captain, "Give me an armed boat's crew to-night, and I will bring out or sink one of those rebel vessels," and the captain had replied, "If you should venture past the guns of the forts, we could read a newspaper through you next morning."

There was a delicious aroma of flowers one night, and, the next morning, the pretty Island of Abaco was in sight. The ship steamed through Northwest Channel, past Stirrup Key and the Hens and Chickens, and away southeast from Carrysfort Lighthouse. The water was clear and grayish green over the light sands of the Great Bahama Banks. The deep-sea lead was cast frequently to mark the depth of water, and to bring up sand and shell to show the bottom and the position of the ship. The pleasant day was succeeded by a foggy night. The ship steamed slowly over the lazy billows, and Careswell was upon the bridge.

"Sail ho! Hard a starboard! a schooner, sir, just ahead!" came hoarsely from the forecastle lookout.

"Hard a starboard, quartermaster!" yelled

Careswell, pulling bells to stop and to reverse the engine, in order to prevent a collision.

"Schooner ahoy! What schooner is that?" shouted Careswell.

"Schooner Harcourt, of Wilton, South Carolina," was the reply.

"Where are you from and where bound?"

"From South Edisto, bound to Nassau."

"What is your cargo?"

"Eighty-four bales of sea-island cotton."

"Very well; lay to, and I will send a boat on board."

The second cutter was piped away by the boatswain's mate, manned and armed, and Mr. Howard boarded the vessel. He returned soon with the owner, the captain and the mate, bringing some clearance papers, and an English and a Confederate flag. The vessel had been safe within Dixie, and had fallen a prize to the Nautilus by venturing out. Her captain had run through the blockading fleet and wished to get to Nassau; but unknown currents and squally weather had driven him from the course, and he was glad to be captured to escape shipwreck and death. The owner of the vessel and cargo had never before been at sea, and he rejoiced at his rescue from a

watery grave, although he said grimly, "My ransom is very expensive, as cotton is worth about two dollars a pound."

The captured men were kept prisoners, a prize crew was detailed, and Midshipman Higgins navigated the prize safely to Philadelphia and delivered her to the commodore at the navy yard.

The Nautilus proceeded on her voyage, and the men off watch, who had assisted in fitting out the prize, turned into their hammocks and bunks. They were soon awakened by loud cries, "Breakers ahead! Hard a port the helm!" and violent ringing of signal bells to the engineer. The crew saw, not jagged rocks and foaming surf, but a huge turtle (Sphargis coriacea), ten feet long, throwing out its enormous flippers and sporting upon the smooth sea. He paddled away and sank out of sight, when the ship churned on her way.

The weather was warm and sultry, next day, and the men were ordered into white shirts and straw hats. The blue insignia of rank on the white and the golden letters on the hatband made the jackies look *chic,* but a change of wind to the north, lightning flashes and a cold rain,

after meridian, forced a change of toggery back to the blue.

A schooner, close-reefed, was hove to by a blank cartridge, followed by a solid shot through the mainsail, and her captain danced frantically about; but her cargo of molasses, and her proper clearance papers from Matanzas, were proof of her intention to go to Boston, and both vessels dipped colors in salute and parted.

The gale howled, the sky was filled with flying scud, the wind sang treble and bass through the rigging; great seas jumped up the sides of the ship; spray fell in sheets upon the forecastle deck; the upper yards were down, the topmasts were housed, and everything was lashed securely, The good ship plunged to the catheads and rolled to the gun-ports; oilskin sailors blinked under their sou'westers and hung on to rail-pins and gun-tackles; officers crouched along the bulwarks; helmsmen and the quartermaster watched the compass and course, and chirping Mother Carey's chickens and screaming gulls followed and fed along the wake.

It was not agreeable below decks. Bunks and bulkheads creaked; camp-stools and chairs made noisy excursions about the rooms; dishes and

silverware rattled in the pantry; the ward-room boys tumbled around, as they put the rails on the table; the sailors off watch played dominoes and sewed, and the officers read, wrote letters, and spun yarns.

The norther came suddenly, the barometer fell rapidly, and the majesty of the gale was not appreciated by its victims. This sneaking, brutal storm, that nips the orange and the vine, splits sails, breaks off topmasts, and wrecks vessels, is hated by jackies, and they growl and tell stories to the marines until the sun shines again.

"There was an old lady had a son, who returned from the West Indies and told wonderful stories," said Brenneman, a boatswain's mate. "He said, 'There are fish that fly on board ship, when a lighted lantern is hung up at night, and we have them for breakfast; and, in the West Indies, there are mountains of sugar and rivers of rum.'

"The mother replied, 'I can well believe there are mountains of sugar and rivers of rum, but fish that fly the Lord never did see.'"

Brenneman was an old sea-dog, battered and scarred by thirty-two years' naval service. His hair was white, his teeth were few, and his hands

were rough as a seal's flipper. He was entitled to a home in a naval asylum, but he preferred life on board ship, and declared war against any one who dared to hint at his waning powers and his senility.

"When I am old (he was 63 years), I intend to retire to a farm and write a book," he said.

He had a streak of piety like most sailors, but the men had to jump quick when he blew his whistle, or he would swear like a pirate. He thought the Lord would not be hard on poor Jack, but judge him according to his opportunities. He became sentimental one night watch and repeated:

> "There's a sweet little cherub sits way up aloft,
> To keep watch o'er the life of poor Jack."

It was summery next morning, and the ship was steaming rapidly southward. After general-quarters, the lookout aloft reported, "Land ho! Dead ahead, sir!" and the Pan y Matanzas and the bold coast of Cuba broke through the mist and gladdened all hearts. The lighthouses, the Santa Cruz and the Moro Castle fortifications, and the narrow entrance to Havana, were soon visible, and the Nautilus steamed in among buoys and

vessels until a gun from the Cabanas battery stopped her for inspection by the officers of the port.

A Spanish lieutenant, and a surgeon, both in full uniform, came off in a boat and were received by the deck-officer, the surgeon, and the executive. A little talk over a bottle of sherry, some punctilious etiquette, a formal leave-taking, and the ship steamed on and anchored in the foul harbor of Havana. Vessels of many nationalities surrounded her, and small craft were numerous. White buildings, luxuriant gardens, feathery palms, green parks, and gray roads winding among hills and groves, made beautiful pictures.

The awnings were spread, the windsails placed in the hatches, the ropes coiled, the boats lowered and boomed out, and the men ordered into summer clothes. A naval lieutenant brought the compliments of the Spanish admiral of the West Indies squadron, a tender of hospitality, and offer of services. Captain Preston returned compliments and thanks, and expressed the intention of paying a visit to the admiral next morning.

The Spanish flag was run up to the fore-truck and an admiral's salute of thirteen guns was fired from the howitzers. The Spanish flag-ship

hoisted the American flag at the fore-truck and returned the salute gun for gun to the number of nine. Then Captain Preston and the surgeon went on shore to pay official visits to the Consul-General of the United States, and the Governor-General of Cuba.

The Consul-General was received next morning by the ship's company at general-quarters, and saluted with nine guns. It was good to hear him talk of home and the successful progress of the war.

A beautiful barge, flying the imperial flag of Spain, approached the ship, an hour later, and the Governor-General of Cuba, with a brilliant staff, was received in a formal manner, the Spanish flag was hoisted forward, the drum gave three ruffles, the officers saluted, the marines presented arms, and a salute of fifteen guns was fired in his honor. There was an interchange of social and official compliments and much ceremony, as the gentlemen departed.

Then the Spanish admiral returned Captain Preston's formal visit, and was received with similar honors, except that he got only two ruffles of the drum and thirteen guns.

The official visits were ended, but there was

a stream of native and foreign, civilian and military people until sunset, and they had to be shown through the ship, dosed with sherry and champagne, and talked to in different languages. The wardroom resounded to popping corks, clinking glasses and polyglots.

The officers assembled later on the quarter-deck and quizzed the surgeon for news, while they smoked the fresh Principe cigars, which he had kindly brought them. The letter-bag had been emptied, but there was little important news, as the departure from the States had been so recent.

"You fellows must be careful or I may get you on my list," said the doctor; "yellow fever is bad among the merchantmen, and almost epidemic on the island."

"I guess you are right, Doctor; I saw a boat-load of corpses, covered partly by a tarpaulin, go across the harbor to the cemetery," said Howard gravely.

"The authorities put dead men away with short prayers and little ceremony. Havana is a fine nest for Yellow Jack. Its harbor is fouled by sewage; the slow tides do not carry it away; and the surrounding hills hinder the wind from

purifying the noxious atmosphere. Not a drop of harbor water must be used on board; the fever rages on merchant ships that wash decks."

"You make me shudder. Do you think there is danger, Doctor?" asked Ashton nervously.

"Yes; more than on the African coast, where special precautions are taken against its intense malaria, and native Kroomen are employed to relieve the sailors from exposure."

"Will you permit us to go on shore?"

"Of course; but I will give sanitary rules for the protection of everybody."

CHAPTER VII.

"Cakes and wine for my lady."

NIGHT had fallen and lights twinkled among the shipping and the houses of the city. A gentle breeze perfumed by flowers came sighing through the gun-ports. Sounds of dipping oars, ships' bells striking the hours, carriages in the paved streets, and tinkling guitars in distant *casas,* invited to repose and reverie. In the shadows of bulwarks and gun-carriages, the officers smoked and talked, and began to understand the pleasures of a siesta. They could hardly believe Havana such a pestilential hole as the doctor had described.

"Good news from the consul," said the doctor. "The Confederates are on the defensive now, and our people think the war will soon be ended."

"So we thought in '61," said Howard; "I don't believe it. We are fighting Americans, and they don't know when they are licked."

"The Nautilus excites much curiosity and admiration. The blockade-runners are here in force, and their captains are anxious to know how fast she is."

"After you went on shore, Doctor, the blockade-runners in the harbor covered themselves all over with Confederate flags," remarked Careswell.

"O, yes; their men swagger about the city and frequently attack American sailors. Our men must wear their revolvers and cutlasses on shore, as the authorities will not protect them. If the English had not granted the South belligerent rights, we could seize these vessels and hang their crews. The Cubans sympathize with the rebels because they derive great profit from contraband traffic, but Confederate bills are not taken at all. Gold and cotton are the mediums of exchange. Greenbacks are worth only fifty cents on the dollar."

An excellent shell road, shaded by avocado, mango and palm trees, skirts the harbor, and it is crowded evenings, with volantes full of fashionable ladies, and equestrians of knightly courtesy. They return at dusk to the Plaza da Armaz, a park in the heart of the city, where

the military band gives evening concerts, and the people assemble for recreation and refreshments. The Louvre, the Dominica restaurant and the Governor-General's palace are situated opposite it.

Some of the officers of the Nautilus went on shore one evening and arrived at the park just in time to see the equestrians and the postilions dismount, and the ladies smooth their dresses, which harmonized in color with the carriage linings. Servants and gentlemen distributed refreshments; some ladies promenaded with their lovers; sailors, soldiers, civilians and officers thronged the paths; family groups occupied carriages, and the band played delightful music.

The brilliant scene of social life was very pleasant to the Yankee officers, and they took seats at a table in the Dominica, where they could see and hear through an open casement. While enjoying their refreshments with the American consul, several officers of the blockade-runner fleet took a table near them and began to talk boisterously about the great rebellion. Their remarks became pointed and offensive to the Union men. Wit went out as wine went down, and the party finally sang "The Bonny Blue

Flag," accompanied by clinking of glasses and pounding the table. Then three cheers were given for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy. No attempt at order was made by the restaurant authorities.

The American officers sat quite unconcerned, and felt comfortable at having their side-arms ready. Suddenly, the swarthy leader of the ill-bred crowd walked over to the officers' table and spat at Ashton, who dashed a glass of wine in the rowdy's face and struck him over the head with the back of his sword.

Both parties sprang to their feet and were ready for battle, but when the roughs saw shining revolvers and drawn swords, they turned and went out of the room uttering vile epithets and horrible curses. The Union men departed later down the middle of the narrow streets and arrived safely on board ship.

Fights between Union sailors and Confederate sympathizers were of frequent occurrence, and the calaboose was often filled with the blue and the gray.

"Courting is rather difficult here," remarked Bloss sadly. He had just come off leave in the ten o'clock boat. "I saw a handsome man, wear-

ing a sombrero, a light cloak and a sword, standing beneath a barred window, holding a lady's hand pushed between the iron bars. He looked the real thing, a genuine cavalier, and the white-robed lady stood, a dream of loveliness, in the shadow of the casement. Three hours later, the couple occupied the same relative positions; the same snowy arm protruded, and the man stood on the same leg."

Every one laughed and Bloss looked solemn.

"Queer place, I am convinced," added Careswell. "You can shake hands across a street, but you cannot get into a house through a window; you may call upon a lady, but must endure a relative watching you; a coffee-bag with cut corners serves a slave for a suit of clothes, and a white umbrella is a sign of pecuniary plethora; a negress carries a toothpick in her chignon, and a white lady wears a high back comb; meals are served in the back yards, and every one sleeps in the middle of the day. O, give me back my own New England!"

The gentlemen roared, the steward opened another bottle of sherry, and Cuban affairs were further discussed.

The right side of the entrance to Havana is a

low, sandy beach full of broken timbers of wrecks, which remind one of skeletons of animals half-buried in the desert. The left side is a high wall of rock, surmounted by a lighthouse and the massive towers and bastions of Moro Castle. A frigate was dashed in pieces at its base, and a spouting horn passes up to the greensward and gardens beyond the summit.

An American man-of-war was detained in the narrow entrance to the harbor, when in pursuit of a blockade-runner that had just put to sea. She was permitted to go in half an hour, but too late to catch the fleet steamer, and her crew was disappointed and angry. She steamed back about midnight and fired an 11-inch solid shot directly at Moro Castle. The drums beat to quarters, lights flashed, and guns were manned, but the ship could not be seen in the darkness, and she sailed to the eastward undiscovered. The ball went high over the castle into the country without doing any damage.

The old church where Columbus was entombed was thronged Sunday by the élite of the city; black women, with kinky hair and pointed teeth, sauntered beneath the palm trees, nursing white children; men and women in gala attire visited

the ships and the forts, and bumboat women sold bananas, plums, oranges and cocoanuts around the men-of-war. Social calls, dinner parties and rides outside white walls among the green hills, flower-spangled and bordered by waving palms full of singing birds of gorgeous plumage, kept the officers of the ship busy; but the heat of the sun caused languor and morning weariness, the doctor felt pulses and examined tongues often, and safety as well as duty demanded the open sea. The wash clothes had been returned, the bunkers filled with coal, the deficiencies in stores made good, and the ship was ready for service.

CHAPTER VIII.

"The boatswain's whistle, the captain's hail,
Were like the piping of the gale,
And thunder in the clouds."

One of the blockade-runners was preparing to sail for Mobile. She was a Clyde-built steamer, narrow and sharp, and no doubt very speedy. The long overhangs, deep draft, clipper bow, short spars, large screw and powerful engine, were common to this class of vessels, to which very valuable cargoes were entrusted for the dangerous passage through the navigable obstructions and the Union blockading fleet of the Southern coast. Few men-of-war were speedy enough to catch them. It was only by running them on shore, penning them in a harbor or narrow channel, or getting them within range of the guns by accident or miscalculation, that they were ever captured. When a few of them had

been refitted as Yankee gunboats, they caught their fellows, and made blockade running so unprofitable and dangerous, that the Confederate supplies of food, clothing and munitions of war practically ceased.

The six blockade-runners displayed many Confederate flags this afternoon to cheer their departing companion, the Victoria, and to show contempt for American men-of-war, and the Nautilus in particular. The Victoria hove up her anchor to the songs of " Dixie " and " The Bonny Blue Flag," in which her crew was joined by the men of her sister ships, and she steamed out of the harbor, cheering and receiving cheers from them. Her captain had chosen the time of departure carefully. It was only half an hour to sunset, and no vessel was allowed to leave the port or to enter it aftre the sunset gun had been fired by the Cabana Fortress.

The Union sailors gnashed their teeth and cursed, as the saucy clipper passed, then cheered, when orders were given to prepare to go to sea. The fires had already been stirred up, the anchor hove short, and the boats secured. " All hands up anchor ! " shouted the boatswain, as his sharp whistle ceased. The men yelled with delight, and

the deck was sought by every person who had not duties below. A crowd of Union sympathizers and other people lined the shore and cheered loudly, as the beautiful ship steamed slowly out of the harbor. When she neared Moro, a Spanish officer came on board and ordered Captain Preston to hold his ship within the entrance until half an hour had elapsed after the Victoria's departure. The officers compared watches, drank champagne, smoked, argued and expostulated, but the port regulation had to be observed.

Captain Preston would have defied the Spanish frigate behind him, and the guns of Moro, and sailed after the vessel flying to the northwest, if he had not known he would thus violate a law of nations for which he would have been obliged to answer to his own government. Therefore, the Nautilus was kept backing and going ahead in the channel for half an hour, and blowing off steam like a roaring lion robbed of his prey, while the crew walked about the deck, fretting and cursing, and wishing Moro would blow up and Cuba sink beneath the sea. Permission was finally given to go, the visiting officer departed in his boat, the Nautilus sprang ahead

under a full head of steam and passed out to sea, as the setting sun colored the walls of Moro and the sunset gun was fired over her. The gun closed the port until sunrise. Yet, as the war vessel slipped out, a little schooner, loaded to the booms with cotton, slipped into safety and a market, and another prize was lost to the Nautilus. There was one law for naval vessels, and another for freebooters and Confederates.

The wind was easterly outside, the stars hung low, the sea was rising, the gulls were screaming, and storm clouds were gathering in the orient. All sail was crowded on the Nautilus, the engine was driven at its greatest speed, and a course was laid to intercept the Victoria near Tortugas. All lights were extinguished except the one in the binnacle, the bow-chaser Parrot gun was loaded with a shell, and double lookouts were stationed in all parts of the ship. The log showed a speed of twelve knots at eight-bells of the second dog-watch. This was increased before midnight to fourteen knots, and all night the good ship sped to the westward before wind and screw and seas. The course was changed more to the northward at daybreak, and, at two-bells of the morning watch, a cry came from the lookout in the fore-

topmast crosstrees, "Sail ho! a steamer, two points on the starboard bow, sir!"

When the sun had scattered the morning mist, the sail was made out by glasses to be a low, lead-colored steamer, burning soft coal, giving off black smoke and heading about north north west. She was a foreigner certainly, the smoke proved that, as all American vessels burned hard coal, which gave gray smoke. The Nautilus was outsailing her, and she was becoming more distinct. The excitement increased among men and officers. Everybody was on deck who could be. Even the cooks and waiters slipped up the step-ladders, and neglected the dishes and the boiling coppers to pass judgment upon the situation.

Captain Preston determined to hold the south-east gale behind him, and not lose the use of his sails, as in the chase of the Florida. The Nautilus was steered to windward of the chase, and great care was exercised by Lawson in keeping the sails wrap full. The vessels were three miles apart at noon, and a blank cartridge was fired from the forecastle gun. The stranger hoisted the English flag, stirred up her fires, belched forth great clouds of smoke and kept on her course. A shell was burst near her, but she

merely luffed a little, shook her square-sail along the weather side and kept on her course, hidden almost by the dense smoke. The next shell struck her and made a commotion on board, and she swerved momentarily from her course. The glasses revealed a hole through her smoke-stack. She sped bravely onward over the rough Gulf currents, and excited the admiration of her pursuers. The Parrot was now loaded with solid shot in order to save life and to prevent fire, and fired by Careswell himself. It entered the stern of the steamer, wrecked the engine, passed through one boiler, and arrested her speed. When the cloud of escaping steam had lifted, the vessel lay helpless broadside to the seas, the sails clewed up and the British colors down.

The Nautilus crossed her stern and lay to, with guns manned for treachery, and Mr. Lawson hailed, "Ship ahoy! What ship is that?"

"The English steamer Victoria," was the answer.

"Where are you from, and where bound?"

"From Havre, bound for Vera Cruz!" answered the captain.

"Very well! I will send an officer on board to examine your papers. You cannot bluff us."

"O, go to h—l! You know us well enough, you lanky, cranky Yankee!"

Lawson smiled and the captors yelled and hurrahed all over the ship, until the cutter took an officer to board. Mr. Bloss returned, bringing the captain and the engineer of the Victoria, some irregular clearance papers, and one English and several Confederate flags. He reported a cargo of medicines, provisions, clothing, ammunition and arms.

The Victoria was, therefore, seized as a prize of the United States. The shell that had pierced the smoke-stack had exploded in the bow. The solid shot had knocked down two men at the wheel, plunged below deck, wrecked the cabin, and damaged the engine beyond repair. Her men had been held at their posts by the officers with loaded revolvers, and the latters' zeal and courage were accounted for by the fact that they were part owners of ship and cargo. They had made a brave attempt to save their property, in contrast with conduct of other officers of captured blockade-runners, who had surrendered after the first shot.

The Victoria was towed through the coral reefs into the snug harbor of Key West, and the

shore of the island and the walls of Fort Taylor were covered by cheering crowds of citizens and soldiers. Captain Preston delivered the prisoners to the commander of the post, and the vessel to the Prize Court, and received congratulations from all the loyal people on the island.

CHAPTER IX.

"Each gave each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm."

THERE is great contrast between the physical characteristics of the West Indies and the Florida Keys. The former are founded upon azoic rock, elevated by volcanic forces from the deep sea bottom. They are mountainous, fertile, wooded and beautiful. Their shores are bold, their channels deep, and their harbors landlocked.

The Keys are the abandoned houses of the coral polyps, which build to the surface of the sea and die in the sunlight. The rough coral mounds catch the debris of the sea; the birds bring seeds and fertilize; the hardy palmetto, the cocoanut palm and the many-rooted mangrove spring up and an island is born. Around its snow white sands and shelving shore are fringing and barrier reefs of white coral.

If a ring of coral forms an atoll, there is for

years a pool or lake of brackish water within it, where pelicans flounder and blue and scarlet herons pose; but no springs or fresh water come through the lime-rock foundations. Vegetation drinks the heavy dew and the rain-drops. The sea bottom around is covered by white sand of comminuted coral; and from the shores of the Keys out to a depth of a hundred feet, coral polyps of various forms and exquisite colors grow from their limestone beds. The corralum of tiny houses takes curious forms of terrestrial plants; the polyps expand their delicate pink and purple tentacles all over it like blooming flowers, and, in its shadows, fish of curious forms and brilliant hues play hide and seek.

Shells of many shapes and colors can be seen through the clear water. Sponges grow between the coral and furnish dark thickets for shuffling crabs. Green and brown turtles, safe in their imbricated armor, paddle lazily over the white sea floor. Sharks sneak warily from shallow banks to coral caves in search of prey. It is fascinating to look down through the pellucid water upon the marine panorama, and to see animated nature in the actual enjoyment of living.

Coral islands rise so little above the sea, they

are not seen until close aboard, and, were it not for their trees, would be difficult to find. Heavy seas roll over them, and lines of gleaming foam reveal their dangerous reefs. Gaps through the outlying reefs may lead to safe harbors within them, but a navigator must know the way, or the spiteful teeth of the coral ledges may crush the vessel like an egg-shell.

The Caribbean Island show bold and high against the night sky and warn the mariner of his danger. The Florida Keys lie low, and the lookout's cry, "Breakers ahead!" is often followed immediately by the crunch of coral and the crash of timbers. Rapid currents and heaving seas soon end the life of a ship and often the lives of her sailors.

The city of Key West was a village of straggling board shanties, and of more substantial coquina houses. The surface of the ground and the walls of the houses shone distressingly white in the sunlight, and the shriveled shrubs and trees seemed to beg piteously for water. Everything and everybody was dry there, and still dryer at the Dry Tortugas Islands.

The Key was crowded by fugitive slaves, white refugees and deserters from the Confederate

army. A few native families gained a livelihood by fishing, sponging, turtling and piloting. The United States garrison, the attachés of the navy, and the court officers, constituted the majority of the population; rebellion had been subdued there without bloodshed, and the non-Unionists were only too glad to have opportunities for intercourse and trade with the northern invaders. The port was headquarters of the East Gulf Squadron; the commodore and his staff resided on shore, and there were many supply ships and men-of-war in the harbor.

The officers of the Nautilus made many pleasant acquaintances among the shore people, and returned their entertainments by dinner parties and balls on the ship, and by land and water excursions. The sailors had swimming, fishing and boat races by day and amateur concerts and dances by night. Shore leave was given them often, and the main streets of the place were thronged by sailors, soldiers and civilians, full of happiness and rum. The ship was a house-boat without danger from an enemy; men and officers remained late upon deck, and some swung their hammocks there. The last rubber of whist, the singing of Miss A——, and the grace and

beauty of Senora M——, were discussed by the smokers aft, and midnight, eight-bells, came too soon.

"How we are suffering for our country!" remarked Careswell one evening to his comrades under the little deck.

"Terribly!" replied Bloss; "I haven't been in my bunk before midnight during the last week."

"Are you going to join the Naval Club? Mackey says we must or be tabooed by the staff."

"I guess not. Really, my coats are becoming too small over constant dining out. As Holmes says:

"'No;—the joke has been a good one,—but I'm getting fond of quiet,
And I don't like deviations from my customary diet.'"

"You are certainly becoming corpulent. I must get off. I got queer at Rio de Janeiro on a few cups of café royal—you know the mix. My companions and I took bearings and ran against a hill every time. We brought up once at a closed gate and kicked for entrance. Sentinels were marching inside and we barely escaped

arrest. We managed to get on board before daylight. Talk of the seven hills of Rome—Rio is all hills. If you stray from Rua Dirieta or Rua Imperatriz, you may be lost. I looked at those hills from the ship and discovered the roads ran in diagonals up their sides; gates were at each angle, and fortifications crowned the summits."

"Rather drunk, young man. Better not join the club, although it is a good social institution," said the doctor.

"The club is not good!" exclaimed Hunting, who was leaning against an after gun. He did not smoke nor drink. "They ought not to have liquors in the place. They are destructive to health and morals, and are at the bottom of much mischief. They are the curse of the service. 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.'"

"Liquors have their place; they should be used, not abused," replied the doctor. "In certain conditions, they are absolutely necessary to nourish the body and to bridge a crisis in disease."

"Keep them for the sick, then. Don't let healthy men poison themselves."

"Ah! You are too hard on us, Pay. You never knew the good fellowship in toddy, nor the delicious reverie in a good cigar."

"I don't want to know them, when they make the mouth like a smoked ham and the stomach like a distillery."

A roar of laughter greeted this speech, and the doctor shrugged his shoulders. The paymaster was a *rara avis* on a man-of-war—a churchman—and, as innocent of evil, as a lambkin of the shears.

The steerage fellows were amusing themselves one day with a negro boy, named George Washington, who had the hard head of his race. He had butted over a barrel of bread, and burst closet doors; and the middies hung a cannon-ball in canvas by a rope from a deck beam and got George to butt it. The first time, he swung it well, the next, he dropped on the deck insensible. There was great consternation; George was laid on a table, dosed with water, vinegar, hartshorn and whiskey, and the surgeon was hastily summoned. He came with the paymaster, and ordered the boy to the sick-bay, where he soon recovered. The paymaster delivered a lecture to the young men, which was full of expletives

and invectives. George returned to duty soon afterwards, looked askance at the doors and the beam, and said to the cook privately, "Them midshipmums is a wicked lot."

CHAPTER X.

"The house was crowded; and the busy fans
Among the gayly dressed and perfumed ladies
Fluttered like butterflies among the flowers."

KEY WEST was under the dominion of Uncle Sam. The United States flag floated on forts and houses and ships. It was without Dixie, although its State was still unconquered and a member of the Confederacy; yet, treasonable talk and acts never came to the knowledge of the conquerors. Everything was peaceful and friendly between natives and foreigners, although there were hundreds of refugee families from Florida, which had abandoned their homes and the cause in order to fatten on Uncle Sam's bounty. The naval vessels served ship's rations of good food to these people and to other sufferers along the coast.

One day a shore boat brought off invitations to a ball at Madam Fontana's. Bloss's note was tied to a bunch of roses. The lady had been a

belle in Charleston, S. C., and was now the widow of a wealthy Spaniard. She had taken a fancy to Bloss. Bloss placed the flowers in a glass of water upon the wardroom table, with a card on which he had written:

"He who does these flowers displace
Must meet the owner face to face."

There was overhauling, brushing and repairing of uniforms by servants and officers. Gold bands had to be sewed on sleeves, shoulder-straps fastened at the corners, white pantaloons repaired and gloves cleaned of mildew. The officers got out their sewing cases, prepared by loving hands at home, and worked like journeymen tailors to make their wardrobes presentable. The dressing began after supper, and one would have thought the officers were going to a reception at the French Court, so much time and care were expended in personal adornment. Several jokes were played during the scramble. One man's boots were chalked; another found mucilage in his hair-oil, and a third noticed too late the addition of carbolic acid to his cologne. At last, Hunting had his mustache and goatee pointed sharply, Lawson had chalked the iron-rust on his

best shirt, Careswell had borrowed a becoming tie, and Bloss had crowded his corpulence into his frock-coat to the imminent danger of buttons.

Diocletian divided the Roman Empire. Lieutenant Bloss cut his bouquet and gave each messmate a boutonnière, keeping a red rose for his lapel. A cutter took the gentlemen on shore. It was nine o'clock. The moon shone brightly upon the white beach and the white walls of the city; the vessels were reflected in dappled silver, and a gentle breeze cooled the excited officers. They passed through the crowded streets; traversed a garden of palms, orange trees and shell walks, and entered a spacious mansion, where music sounded and guests were gathered. Colonel Gordon presented them to Madam Fontana and other ladies.

The large rooms were covered by cool mattings, and the windows draped with costly curtains; the furniture was rosewood and cane in fancy patterns; the walls were adorned by rare paintings and specimens of shell-work; an American and a Spanish flag were draped around a large mirror; branches of white coral, shells of exquisite colors, and stuffed birds of brilliant plumage, occupied conspicuous positions among the

bric-à-brac. The night breeze moved the delicate curtains gently, and music of flutes, violins and guitars floated from unseen quarters.

A merry company of fair women and gallant men filled the long parlors and the broad piazzas round the house. The gentlemen included private citizens, court officials and army and navy officers, in full dress or full uniform, according to station. Some of the ladies were wives of the men, some, their charming daughters, and others, native beauties. Many ladies wore white; others rivaled their northern sisters in silks of delicate pink, buff, pearl and blue. Madam Fontana was robed in gray silk, trimmed with silver lace, and diamonds flashed in her coiffure. She was about twenty-five years of age, and had lost none of her early beauty. She greeted the officers of the Nautilus very cordially and introduced them to her favorite lady friends. The parlors were full of dancers, and the piazza and garden walk had many couples. Careswell danced a set and then walked upon the front piazza with a Miss Good, one of the graceful, beautiful maidens of the city, whose conversation revealed a vacuity of mind not uncommon in tropical climes.

"It's a lovely night; how gently the wind lifts

the palm leaves," said he, in a gush of romantic enthusiasm.

"Yes, it is very gentle," she replied in tremulous tones.

"How delicately the moonlight silvers the wavelets of the Gulf, and paints the shining shore with bands of snowy whiteness."

"Yes, it looks delicate," she murmured.

"Do not the massive walls of Fort Taylor look beautiful, with the light and shade so harmoniously blended?"

"Yes, it looks beautiful."

"It stands there, with its guns frowning upon the water, a representative of the power and dignity of the United States, and a menace to her foes."

"Yes."

"Are you acquainted with the officers of the fort?"

"Yes; I know Lieutenant Hatfield, Lieutenant Long, Colonel Gordon and others. Mister Long is a fine fellow and has such a pretty mustache."

"Do you like to live in Key West?"

"Yes, I think it the nicest place in the world."

"Have you traveled much?"

"I have been to Habana."

"Indeed! that is about ninety miles. What impressed you most in the ancient city?"

"The ladies wear high combs—and the gentlemen smoke cigarettes all the time."

"You find society here gayer since the war began?"

"Yes—there are so many people now."

Miss Good opened and shut her fan coquettishly and looked through the windows at the dancers. Careswell had tried to awaken in this Southern bud something worthy of conversation. His enthusiasm was snubbed; his small talk was exhausted. He forgot himself and yawned with disappointment. Miss Good was fair to look upon, but was an intellectual desert. Several gentlemen looked at him with envious eyes, and he was glad to resign his partner to Long, of the infantry, just as Madam Fontana came and remarked, "Lieutenant Long has been talking in monosyllables to the Misses Garver and pulling fiercely at his mustache while watching you."

"He need not have worried. I was not talking love to Miss Good."

"Never mind. You found her charming, of course?"

"O, very sweet and naive, certainly."

Madam took Careswell's arm, her intimate friend, Miss Laura Montague, joined Bloss, and they strolled together through the garden.

"Miss Good is beautiful and wealthy. She belongs to one of our best families," continued Madam.

"Is her father a leading business man?" asked Careswell, with little show of interest.

"Yes; he owns many turtlers."

"What are turtlers?"

"They are vessels which go among the Keys and catch turtles."

"What does he do with them?"

"He sells them to market men in Habana and at the North."

"The Bible says, 'Turtles coo in Palestine.' Do they do it here?"

"What nonsense! The men find a turtle in shallow water, and throw a pole pointed with iron at him. The iron remains in the shell, and they pull him on board the vessel by an attached line."

"I understand. I thought some one was in the business. We have had turtle souped, boiled, fried and roasted, on board the Nautilus, until I begin to feel like a Testudo."

"A what?"

"A stuffed and animated carapax."

"What *do* you mean, lieutenant?"

"I mean, I am sick of turtle meat. It may do for isolated islanders and intoxicated aldermen, but I prefer beef, even if it is jerked as in Cuba."

"Lieutenant Bloss seems to be a favorite with the ladies," said Madam, changing the subject for one nearer her heart.

"He is a favorite with every one. He keeps us in good humor by his jokes and stories, and quotes poetry by the ream. He is a jolly mess-mate, but I don't know how he will like the smell of gunpowder."

"Are you going into danger? Do you expect to be ordered into battle soon?"

"We are in the service to fight, not to play. We must go where duty calls. We may be ordered against the enemy any time."

"Oh! I think war is terrible. I should be so grieved to have any of my friends of the Nautilus hurt."

"Thank you. Your friends are my comrades."

The party returned to the piazza and met Col. Gordon. "Ah! Careswell, my lad," said he, "beware of moonbeams and bright eyes! Key West ladies are great heart breakers."

"Has any one broken yours, Colonel?" asked Madam archly.

"Not yet, only battered it a little," said he, laughing.

Surgeon McMasters came along with the regimental surgeon's wife and joined in the conversation. Careswell was introduced to Miss Florence Garver, danced with her a number, and escorted her to supper. Madam sat at the head of a long table with Bloss at her right. Miss Garver and Careswell were next to him. Miss Elizabeth Garver and Paymaster Hunting, Miss Good and Lieutenant Long, were seated opposite to them. Colonel Gordon was at the other end of the table, flanked by brilliant lines of ladies and gentlemen. The menu was remarkable, considering the limited market supplies, and many delicacies surprised the guests.

The Misses Garver were strong, rosy-cheeked ladies, quite different from the Southern type, with delicate features and slender forms. Hunting appeared hypnotized by the self-assertion and volubility of his companion. Careswell sat demurely attentive to the communications of Miss Florence, while he anticipated her desires for food and wine. He wondered at the contrast

between her and Miss Good, who spoke little, kept her eyes from roving, and nibbled at the feast merely to keep up appearances. There was a social chasm between the two of which he was ignorant. Miss Good had been born into her set, the highest on the island. Miss Garver had gradually worked into it by assurance, tact, and lavish entertainments, which she was enabled to give, owing to her father's monopoly of the pilotage business.

Captain Garver was a kind, generous, industrious man, conscious of his ignorance of letters, and anxious to educate and elevate his family. He had sent his daughters to a Brooklyn boarding-school, where they had finished the common branches and music and French, and then returned gladly to their island home. The latch-string hung out there for naval officers in particular. The captain had the finest wines and the choicest Havana cigars; the ladies sang and played the piano and the guitar very well, and many a homesick Northerner found sympathy and enjoyment in the hospitable mansion.

Miss Florence rattled on quite excitedly, looked defiance occasionally at Miss Good, and devoted herself to her companion. Careswell had found

in Miss Good a rather torpid mind, but he had now met an intellectual oasis.

"What do you think of our society girls, Lieutenant?"

"They are charming, especially, when they have been at school in the North. Cultivation of the mind improves the features. Beauty is increased by education."

"O, you talk like my teachers used to do."

"My father was a professor. What an intelligent and beautiful woman madam is! Did you know her husband?"

"Yes, pa and he were friends. He held a government appointment in Habana and used to come over here in his yacht. He was handsome and haughty, and belonged to one of the best families in Spain. He found his wife in Charleston, took her to Europe, and you ought to hear her tell of the grand times she had, and the fine people she met at court. Oh! such laces and dresses and jewels, as she brought home! Mm! I saw them all."

"Señor Fontana had a fine villa in the suburbs of Habana where I visited. He died of yellow fever soon afterwards, poor fellow, and Madam took this house for a season."

"I hope she will make a long stay."

"Who is that officer next to Miss Nickerson?"

"Ensign Ashton."

"He and that engineer seem determined to get full."

"I suppose; they generally do."

Careswell looked around uneasily. Hunting had empty glasses; Surgeon McMasters was pledging Surgeon Edwards' health, and civilians and officers were discussing the Mason and Slidell affair. A few patriotic toasts were drunk, and the company arose and sought the piazza and the garden. Careswell managed to separate from Miss Garver in a group of people, and Miss Laura Montague took his arm for a stroll. "Miss Garver wants an escort," said he lightly to Long, who scowled and walked away.

"How did you enjoy your supper and your companion?" asked Miss Laura coldly.

"O, well enough; Miss Garver is kindhearted and sensible."

"She is a conch."

"A what?"

"A conch. Don't you know what that is?"

"Yes, a conch is a shell of the genus Strombus. Conchology, the science of shells, is derived from it."

"But Key West conchs are not shells. They form a class in society. We have here three distinct sets, named Kingfishers, Conchs and Sponges."

"Something like the Brahminical castes in India."

"Have you been in India?"

"No, but I have read about them."

"We have castes here. The Kingfishers are the educated, wealthy, aristocratic people, who lead our society. Madam Fontana is the queen this season, and the most of the guests to-night are her subjects."

"I suppose you are a Kingfisher?"

"Yes, I always was. The Conchs are the middle class. They have moderate means, little education, and poor taste in dress. We invite some of them occasionally to our larger parties. The Misses Garver are conchs, and the tall lady in buff is queen."

Careswell and his companion moved nearer a window to see the lady. At that moment, Mr. Phillis led her out on the floor for a polka, and the couple were soon whirling around the room. Miss Sanders was a graceful dancer, and Phillis would have done better, if he had not been half-

seas-over from mixing wines. The music was fast, the air heavy, the matting slippery, and Phillis turned pale, staggered and fell upon the floor. McMasters had him carried outside where he soon recovered. 'A slight attack of vertigo," explained the surgeon. The music, dancing, promenading and gossiping began again, and the contretemps was soon forgotten.

"I wish to hear about the Sponges. You finished concerning the Conchs, did you not?" said Careswell to Laura.

"Yes. The Sponges are the lowest and poorest class upon the Key. They include the spongers, the laborers and the poor whites, but not the slaves. One rises occasionally to be a Conch, but never a Kingfisher. Now, you know all about us and should understand, that, if you associate with Conchs, you will have few friends among the Kingfishers."

"All right, Miss Kingfisher. Shall we dance the schottische, which the band is playing?"

"With pleasure."

Miss Montague excited much interest because of her grace and beauty. Madam Fontana was the center of a group of guests, who thought the couple very well matched. The musicians went

to supper, and guests began to depart. Careswell stood at the parlor door, cap in hand, when Long brushed rudely past and said to Laura, "May I have the pleasure of escorting you home?"

"No, thank you, I remain with Madam," said she icily.

Long made his adieux, sought Miss Good, and they went away apparently well pleased with each other.

Laura held out her hand to Careswell and said, "Good-night; I hope we shall see you soon again."

"Good-night," said he, kissing her hand, which caused her to shrink within the parlor door.

"A Dios, Señor," said Madam; "we shall always be glad to see you, when you can leave your arduous duties on the Nautilus."

"Thank you, Madam; good-night," said he, bowing and going away with the surgeon.

Bloss was the last officer of the Nautilus to depart, and accompanied Colonel Gordon. The other officers were waiting at the boat landing and joked him for a long tarrying. He laughed merrily at the jibes, and pointed to Madam's rose in his buttonhole.

"Your adieux were lengthy, Bloss. What did you talk about?" said the paymaster.

"I merely remarked:

"'The stars their early vigils keep,
The silent hours are near.'"

"Did that take half an hour? I have no doubt Madam grew sleepy over your prosiness," observed the doctor.

"Great bodies move slowly. I came away with the ease and dignity of an officer on the retired list."

"Did you kiss her hand and vow eternal fidelity?" ventured Careswell.

"No, but I saw you do so to another lady."

Every one laughed and Careswell shrank back abashed.

"I might have said:

"'I must leave thee lady sweet!
Months must waste before we meet;
Winds are fair and sails are spread,
Anchors leave their ocean bed;—'

but I did not, because I expect to see my lady to-morrow, and we are not yet ready for sea."

"Will you gentlemen get into the boat?" growled the sleepy midshipman in charge of the ship's cutter.

"When we get ready, sir," replied Lawson curtly.

"Very well, sir; I've been waiting here an hour, and I protest at further delay."

"Well, protest you may, but wait you must, my son of Neptune. That is your share of the party."

"Let's get on board, Lawson," said the doctor persuasively.

"All right, less get 'board, genl'men," Lawson muttered.

The party got into the boat, the bow oarsman pushed off, the oars were let fall, and they were soon on board. Ashton was rather lively, and explained several times how he happened to get half-seas-over, and Phillis kept asking, "Did you see me dance with the Queen of the Conchs?"

The tired officers sought their bunks and all lights were out, but they heard occasionally the words, sung to a popular air:

"I danced with the Queen of the Conchs, Conchs, Conchs;
I danced with the Queen of the Conchs."

Thus ended one of the most enjoyable affairs at Key West.

CHAPTER XI.

"Full and swollen is every sail,
I see no longer a hill;
I have trusted all to the sounding gale—"

SOMETHING happened daily at the Key. A captured vessel, in charge of a prize crew, would arrive and bring news of adventures. Small cruisers would come along the Keys from the Florida coast and bring escaped slaves and refugee whites in all degrees of raggedness. Dispatch boats would bring news of coast operations to the commodore, and transport men, mail and orders to vessels on the blockade. The steamer Union came from Philadelphia every month with passengers, mail, fresh beef, wines, ice, etc., for the fleet and the lonely blockaders of the East Gulf. The Naval Club was crowded nightly by a patriotic host, commenting on war news and the capabilities of the leaders on sea and land.

The crew made merry during the second dog-watch, and music of accordions, violins, banjos, guitars, flutes, harmonicas, jew's-harps and bones, filled the ship. Singing, dancing and burlesque theatricals amused all ranks. A space between two cannon served for a dressing-room; a gun-carriage made a judge's bench, a sofa or a throne. The pikes and the cutlasses armed an imperial guard or a band of robbers. Tarpaulins and swabs served to convert men into jackasses, camels or elephants. Ropes divided the deck into parquet and boxes in which the spectators gathered to enjoy the fun. It was sailors' holiday a month, and Lawson favored it because it kept the men out of the grog-shops.

There was queer work being done daily on the ship. The lead-colored hull was painted black; the topgallant masts were replaced by short, stubby ones; covers were made for the smoke-stack and lower masts and painted yellow; and barrels of tar were stored with the coal to be burned with it in order to give off black smoke. The vessel thus disguised, showing black smoke, would pass readily for an Englishman, and block-ade-runners might be enticed within gunshot. Every nation's ships have peculiar characteristics

by which a nautical man can recognize them as easily as he can an acquaintance on the street.

One morning news spread through the ship that she would go to sea in the afternoon. The officers rushed on shore to take leave of their friends; letters were written hastily for the last mail; a harbor pilot and Mr. Lawson mounted the bridge; the anchor was weighed, and the Nautilus steamed out of the reef-guarded harbor of Key West, and shaped a course for the west end of Cuba. A steamer was hove to next morning by a gun, but she was the merchant ship Mississippi, from New York to New Orleans, and hopes of big prize money were blasted. The ships separated with cheers and dipping of flags; Cuba rose soon afterwards from the sea, and the Nautilus steamed along the coast towards Havana. A schooner was sighted in the afternoon going north, but she turned and rushed for the coast to get within the legal limit of protection. A blank cartridge was fired, but she did not heed it. A shell roared over her, and she hove to and dropped her mainsail. A boat was lowered to board her, when a fierce squall of wind and rain hid her from view. The Nautilus went steadily towards the shore until soundings

by the lead warned her to stop; the forecastle Parrot was loaded with shell, and groups of drenched men stood about watching the sea. The squall ceased as suddenly as it had begun, the mist lifted, and the little schooner was seen scudding towards the shore. A couple of shell brought her to the wind again, and Ashton was sent to examine her.

"She is in neutral waters and thinks she is safe," observed Rockett, viewing her with marine glasses.

"I would take her anyway just for her impudence. She had no right to run away during the squall," remarked Howard.

"She appears to be about nine miles off shore," said Bloss, looking through the large end of the spy-glass.

"I think she is more than three miles off shore; the hills make her seem nearer to the island than she really is," declared Lawson.

"We should have the benefit of the doubt. I will seize her, if her cargo is contraband, or she is a blockade-runner," said the captain decisively.

Ashton boarded the craft, left some of his boat's crew in charge, and returned with fraudulent papers and five prisoners. She was the

Fanchon, of Mobile, one day out from Havana, loaded with soda-ash, salt, dry goods, provisions and aguardiente. She was the cotton-loaded vessel that had flouted the Confederate flag at the Nautilus, a few days previous, at the entrance to Havana, and now became a prize of the United States.

Ashton reported the vessel well supplied, and Careswell and a crew of five men, armed and equipped, with the rebel captain and mate as prisoners, were hastily transferred to the schooner's deck. Verbal and written orders were given to proceed to Key West and deliver vessel and prisoners to the commodore and the Prize Court. The young commander—he was only twenty-two—stood upon the spray-washed deck, surrounded by the crew, the unwelcome prisoners, the baggage and the arms, and responded to Howard's hearty "Bon voyage," as he embarked the temporary men and pulled back to his ship.

Before Careswell had made a careful examination of anything, he was forsaken upon the little craft of untried qualities, in the midst of threatening seas and violent squalls of wind and rain. He saw the Nautilus vanish in the darkness, the last glimmer of her binnacle light, as she pitched

in the rising sea, and felt he had been hastily and carelessly abandoned without that care for his comfort and safety, which he had a right to expect. His heart sank and a tear ran down his cheek; then, he gave orders rapidly and prepared his vessel for the gale.

Squalls and heavy rain continued and battered and soaked the men, who kept watch on the Nautilus, until the morning sun stilled the angry tumult. The great ship buffeted the seas and rolled heavily all night, and thoughts of the hastily abandoned crew on the little Fanchon made many uneasy sleepers. An attempt was made to find the prize, but the search was abandoned in the afternoon, and the Nautilus steamed to the eastward. All talked sadly of the good fellows, who had gone to Davy Jones' locker. A French frigate, bound to Vera Cruz; a Sardinian schooner *en route* to Europe, and several American vessels, were boarded, saluted and permitted to go on their way. A call was made at Havana for mail, orders were received to proceed to Key West, and she dropped anchor there five days after separation from the Fanchon. The prize had not arrived; she had not been reported, and Captain Preston said, " She has undoubtedly

foundered. Such a small craft could not weather such a tempest and sea."

A strong breeze was blowing; white-capped billows were chasing across the harbor; pilot boats were scudding under bonnetless jibs and reefed mainsails, and boats tossed and chafed at the wharves. A small vessel lay at anchor near the lighthouse in the Northwest Channel, five miles distant. She got under way at noon, when the tide was high, and beat into the harbor. Her broad spread of canvas, great speed, white bone of foam at the bow, and lee rail sea swept, attracted the attention of the fleet, and the men of the Nautilus wondered what dare-devil was sailing her. Onward she flew before the gale; crossed astern of the Nautilus; reduced sail, and anchored near shore, her flags streaming wildly, the stars and stripes above the stars and bars. It was the Fanchon, with Careswell at the helm.

The crew of the Nautilus did not wait for orders. They climbed upon the hammock-nettings and into the lower rigging and cheered, and other crews cheered a glad welcome; and the little crew of the Fanchon returned the cheers most heartily.

Careswell delivered the prisoners to Fort

Taylor, the vessel to the commodore and Prize Court, and returned with his men to the Nautilus, where they were received with enthusiasm, as from the dead. Over hardtack and sherry the young commander told his story.

"I never felt as disconsolate, as I did when the Nautilus disappeared in the darkness, but the rushing storm and the pitching of the schooner warned me to get to work, if I wished ever to see land again. I ordered the bags, bedding and arms put in the cabin, took the helm myself, and reduced sail to a bonnetless jib and a close-reefed mainsail. My Cape Cod sailors knew what to do and acted quickly, although the running rigging was fouled and out of place, the darkness was intense, and the seas were breaking over the forecastle. The prisoners assisted in the work; the captain said, 'I will look after this main reef-earing, as I know how it is rove.' It was necessary for him to go behind me to get at it, and, as he stepped back, I felt a strong tug at my revolver, which was strapped in its frog on my sword-belt. I grasped the pistol handle, struck away the captain's hand, and turned towards him. He was busy with the reef-earing, and I let him

finish passing it; then, I drew my pistol and ordered him and his mate forward of the mainmast in the drenching seas, and I kept them there until morning. I told Robbins, my best man, what had happened, and he said, 'The captain, mate and our Dago cook are too friendly, and I suspect, had the former got your pistol, none of us would be here now to talk about it. You and I would have been shot, the arms seized, the other men driven overboard and the vessel recaptured. It is lucky the strap was buttoned.'

"I agreed with him, gave him the Dago's revolver, kept the prisoners and the cook forward, and ordered the other sailors to remain near the cabin and to watch the Dago closely. My men understood the gravity of the situation and proved reliable and vigilant. The little vessel pitched frightfully, the seas broke over her bow, the binnacle lamp went out, the rain came in sheets, the hold had two feet of water, and every one was soaked and miserable; but we held our course for the Key.

"The next morning the storm ceased; the sun arose to dry our clothes and to cheer us, and the sea became smoother. We removed the soda-ash farther aft, where the salt had dissolved and

been pumped overboard; trimmed the vessel more by the stern; crowded all sail, and went along merrily. Then the cook served breakfast. The coffee had a foul smell and taste, and I feared it was poisoned. Investigation showed the cause: the water, carried in old aguardiente casks, was putrid and slimy. We were terribly disappointed. Sailors must have their morning coffee or there is great discontent.

"There was—

'Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.'

"I calculated we were about 175 miles from Key West, and we could endure some privation for the glory of taking in a prize, but, now, that we knew there was no good water, every one became very thirsty. Robbins and I took turns steering and sleeping, the men were divided into starboard and port watches, and the Dago and prisoners were kept forward of the foremast. My orders read:

"'U. S. S. Nautilus,
"'Off the Island of Cuba,
"'June 13th, 186—.

"'Sir:—Proceed with the Prize Schooner Fanchon under your charge to the port of Key West, and there deliver her, together with the accompanying papers (which were all that were found on board) and the persons retained as witnesses, to the Judge of the United States District Court or to the United States Prize Commissioners at that place, taking his or their receipt for the same. You will not deliver her, the papers, or the witnesses to the order of any other person or parties unless directed to act otherwise by the Navy Department, or Flag-Officer commanding the squadron.

"'The Fanchon was seized by this vessel, under my command, on the thirteenth day of June, 186—, off the Island of Cuba, for violating the rules governing the blockade at present instituted by the United States; and, of the circumstances attending the case, you are sufficiently aware, and will communicate them when required to do so by competent authority.

"'On your arrival at Key West, and imme-

diately after you have visited the Judge or Prize Commissioners, you will call upon the United States District Attorney thereat, show him these instructions, and give him any information concerning the seizure he may solicit. Then you will next report yourself in person to the commanding officer of the navy yard thereat, show him also these instructions, and ask his directions, when needed, as to the disposition of yourself and the rest constituting the prize crew. Finally when duly notified by the judge, prize commissioners or district attorney, that your services are no longer wanted by the court, you will at once return to your vessel, taking with you the men under your command and the receipt above alluded to, unless otherwise ordered by superior authority.

" ' You will receive herewith a communication for the Secretary of the Navy, giving him a detailed account of the seizure. This you will mail immediately on your arrival at Key West.

" ' Your attention is called to the annexed " Circular " lately issued from the Navy Department, to which have been added since it was issued, the words in the last paragraph, beginning with, " together with a descriptive, list, etc.,"

which you will see is complied with, in every particular, before sailing with your prize.

"'Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"'Amasa Preston,

"'Commander.

"'Commanding U. S. Steamer Nautilus.'

"'To Lieutenant Harry Careswell,

"'U. S. Navy.'"

"Statements of the men's accounts mentioned in the Circular, the Fanchon's papers, a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, and another to Commodore Bailey, accompanied the orders.

"We had steered all night by the wind, had been knocked about by the seas, and could only guess at the distance run; I therefore took the vessel's longitude, at 4 P. M., by time sights, and found we were in Texas. Another trial placed us in the meridian of the Azores. The vernier screw was gone, and I was obliged to work the quadrant with my fingers. 'Fingers were made before forks,' but my fingers couldn't move the vernier correctly, and I threw the hog-yoke into a bunk. Scientific navigating was impossible, and I thereafter relied upon the log, the compass, and dead reckoning—and went astray. I

knew the swift Gulf currents would help us to the eastward, and we would strike the Florida keys somewhere, and we did.

"At four-bells of the morning watch, the lookout shouted, 'Sail ho!'

"'Where away?' asked Robbins.

"'Four points on the port bow, sir.'

"I was up in a moment and saw a schooner standing to the southward. We wanted water, and we wanted her, if she was a blockade-runner, and, therefore, I altered the course. She was suspicious, turned her stern to us, and the pursuit continued until dark. She took no notice of the Confederate flag we hoisted, followed later by the United States ensign. Even the prisoners had taken much interest in the race, thinking a fight might give them a chance to regain their vessel. We lost a day and our reckoning, and could only guess which way to steer, as we resumed the voyage. We sighted the Tortugas and Fort Jefferson, the next evening, after a fine day's run, shortened sail, and stood north four hours. When we had run back four hours, intending to call for water, the island had disappeared. We sailed to the eastward all day hunting for Key West, passed several small islands,

and, approaching one at dark, ran hard and fast on its sand bank. I could not kedge off the bank, and the tide ebbed and left the vessel uninjured in about a foot of water.

"I sent the boat to the largest key for fresh water, although I had little hope, because I knew an atoll isle was a ring of sand upon coral foundations, covered by mangrove trees, and containing only a central lagoon of brackish water. The quest was unsuccessful, and my thirsty men cursed all Florida. The water in the casks had changed to ropy jelly. Burned by the sun, washed by salt spray, fed on salt food and depressed by anxiety, our thirst became unendurable, and we took the water sparingly to save life. It sickened every one, and, to lessen its pernicious qualities, I mixed aguardiente with it. The vile mixture checked abdominal disorder, but fevered the blood and disordered the brain. We were conscious of our responsibilities, but thought and acted in a dreamy delirium. Objects took fantastic shapes; the isles seemed to rise and fall in the evening mist; trees appeared to stretch out arms to seize us; the kedge-anchor rope took the form of a serpent writhing in the water; ripples of the sea became tongues of flame; the murmur

of waves against the stern sounded harshly; the footfalls upon the deck smote the ear like blows of a sledge-hammer, and a falling oar evoked claps like thunder.

"A school of fish would rush past and silver the sea; a clumsy turtle would crawl lazily over the sandy bottom like a nightmare; a triangular fin would cut the surface and a stealthy shark would bring shudders at what might be. The bright stars mocked our misery. It was only by great exercise of will that we could shake off the illusions of our fevered, over-wrought senses and keep from going mad. Sick in body and mind, far from human help, lost in the line of keys, and our vessel, perhaps, doomed to wreck, who could help foreboding and despair? Yet, hope did not forsake us, and courage kept us through that dreadful night.

"When the clouds seemed darkest, the silver lining shone from the white sails of a schooner, and the rattle of her cable told us she had anchored. I sent three men in the boat for water, and they returned soon with what to us seemed the most delicious beverage in the world. The captain of the turtler came on board the Fanchon at daylight and informed me we were ninety

miles east of Key West. He said no inexperienced man could calculate the variability and the violence of the currents among the Florida keys. They had carried the Fanchon past Tortugus and Key West, while she had stood off and on to wait for daylight.

"I gave the captain a box of cigars and a jug of rum; thanked him for the water and his information, and he departed happy. We kedged our craft off the bank, at high tide, and arrived last night near the northeast light of this harbor and anchored. We had the pleasure this morning of seeing the Nautilus steam past Fort Taylor and come to anchor. I knew you would think the Fanchon had foundered and decided to surprise you. Our little craft is stiff as a church, and can carry all her ragged sails safely. How the pilots stared, when they saw her jib-topsail and gaff-topsail set in this fresh gale, and her rail dragging under water.

"Well, here I am, safe and sound, with a peeling nose and blistered fins, hungry as a shark for all the good things of the wardroom mess. Open more sherry, steward."

"Ever drunk before?" asked Bloss, and the gentlemen roared.

This report of unique experience was often interrupted by questions and comments, and Careswell had to repeat it many times to his friends. Madam Fontana declared he was a hero, and Laura's eyes were full of approbation and tenderness. The club diminished its stock of wine in drinking his health, and dinner parties and dances soon restored his health and vigor.

CHAPTER XII.

"How vain the watch that hirelings keep—
The idle flag that waves.—"

Not many days after Careswell's return to the ship, she steamed away from the busy city to the west coast of Florida, and anchored inside the entrance to Charlotte Harbor. The sluggish rivers and many channels between the islands of western Florida, make an intricate net work of waterways. There, curlew, ducks, pelicans, cranes, sharks and alligators disported, and blockade-runners found safe navigation and secure hiding-places. Small vessels poled along the land-locked channels entirely around the peninsula until opposite Nassau, where they set sail and reached the British port and market. Their cargoes consisted of fish, sweet potatoes, turpentine, cotton and deserters from the starving country. Refugee families built palmetto shacks on the islands, cultivated gardens, and

were fed and clothed by naval vessels. Men, guilty of crime, or desertion from the Confederate army, sought British or Spanish protection across the sea. A few so-called Union families had clearings on the main, and bartered game, fresh pork, melons, yams and limes for hardtack, coffee, sugar, salt, tobacco and canned food. There was no settlement of natives nearer than Tampa, where Confederate soldiers were stationed.

Charlotte Harbor is ten miles wide and twenty-five long. Peace River enters its head; the Caloosahatchie River empties into its southern arm. A few "Regulators" defended the former with two obsolete cannon; a larger force occupied Fort Myers, twenty-five miles up the latter river, which was built during the Seminole War. Florida rivers run in beds of slimy mud, and are full of sharks and alligators. Swamps, lagoons and rivers constitute a large part of Florida. Hummocks of solid land, covered by forests, form ridges back from the coast. The carboniferous period of geology seems restored to one lost in its wildernesses.

Wild cattle roamed the savannahs; red deer browsed in the bushes; bears growled in thickets

of cane; coons traveled in packs over the oyster ledges; terrapin bored through the mounds; snakes wriggled in the marsh grass, or raised their menacing heads above the water; turtle laid eggs on the shady beaches; alligators lay in rows along the muddy banks; sharks' fins cut the surface of the water; devilfish flapped their wings in mighty struggles for food or defense; porpoises ventured and rolled into brackish estuaries; clouds of pink and white curlew fed on the marshes and whitened the mangroves; pelicans flew in single file across the sky; hawks, buzzards, quacks, gulls and eagles hovered around; blue herons stood in silent astonishment of man, and scarlet flamingoes rested among the wild flowers and paled their gorgeous bloom.

There were myriads of snipe, quail, marsh-hens, plover, doves, blackbirds, shags, boobies, blue-jays, red birds, mocking-birds, owls, ducks, swans and many others.

Muscles, quahaugs and oysters were plentiful. Sawfish, jewfish, skates, tarpon, sheepshead, catties, red fish, toadfish, sandfish, grouper and mullet, made the waters alive with flashing fins and glittering scales.

Charlotte Harbor was a paradise for sports-

men, and the men of the Nautilus had little to do, except to watch the channels at night and fish and hunt by day. A single draught of the seine half filled a cutter with fish, and two hunters could shoot enough curlew in one evening to give all the crew pot-pie for dinner. There was one dangerous animal in this Eden, the mosquito. Tropical heat develops the harmless hundred-legs of the temperate zone into the venomous centipede. The mosquito becomes large, numerous and pestiferous in the warm climate of Florida. His singing filled the wardroom like the music of a lilliputian brass band. He clogged the lamps; struck the face like rain; penetrated thick clothing; pursued officers and men into the crosstrees, and found blood through the interstices of oilskins and tarpaulin covers. When the wind lulled, especially at night, no armor could protect the sleepy, harassed men. Every one smeared exposed parts with petroleum, or surrounded himself with tobacco smoke. The men became unfit for duty from lack of sleep; discipline was relaxed, and the daily drilling was temporarily suspended.

The Confederates at Tampa had sent expeditions to Peace River, the Caloosahatchie, and

Charlotte Harbor, to attack the man-of-war boats, to capture refugees and deserters, and to collect all the food and forage of the region. They had hung some innocent non-combatants, because they preferred Uncle Sam's rations and protection, to Confederate starvation and robbery. They protected vessels up river while loading, and guarded them along their courses until they passed the picket-boats of the enemy, and were well on their way.

Refugees brought news to the Nautilus of boats and vessels loading up river. There were depots of goods and cotton at rendezvous back in the forest. An old Indian fort at the forks of Peace River was garrisoned by a few men to protect the branches above it. It was decided to strike a blow at the region, and to disperse the Florida Regulators, who consisted of cattle-drivers, lumbermen and farmers, desperate men and dead shots with a rifle. They had fleet horses, knew every foot of the country, and where boats were kept to cross the rivers. It was dangerous to ascend the rivers, cramped in a boat, and a mark for sharpshooters along the banks. The edge of the Confederacy was more dangerous than either within or without it.

A refugee came down the bay in a dugout and reported a vessel up river, loaded with cotton, and ready to sail the first dark night for Nassau. A cutter with eleven men, armed and equipped, was sent in charge of Ensign Ashton to reconnoitre and blockade the mouth of the river. He returned the next afternoon with two men wounded. He had guarded the river until daylight, and then landed on a point to cook breakfast. The enemy had approached behind their horses, through tall grass, and, having no shelter on the point, Ashton had embarked quickly and been fired upon by about a dozen men. His men returned the fire with Sharpe's carbines, and killed one horse and wounded two soldiers. The affair showed lack of caution, but Ashton's courage was undaunted.

This event caused excitement among the crew, and when the boatswain piped and called, "All who wish to volunteer for an expedition up the bay, lay aft to the mainmast!" every boy and man in the ship rushed aft. A selection of tried and experienced men was made for two boats; the first and second cutters were provisioned and armed; Careswell was ordered to command, and Ashton took the second cutter. Mr. Crane,

a refugee from the river region, went in the first cutter, as pilot. Captain Preston gave orders to guard the river and capture any boats or vessels that appeared. The boats cleared away with three cheers from the ship's company, and at dark were far up the bay.

Careswell stationed Ashton's boat in the south channel behind an island, and anchored his own in the middle of the mile-wide mouth. Nothing disturbed the serenity of the night save jumping fish and grunting alligators. The camp-fire of Fort Winder burned brightly on the right bank and outlined the soldiers moving round it.

The boats were pulled to an island before daylight, and hidden among the mangrove branches. A camp was made back from the shore, and a lookout climbed a tall pine. Another night and day passed without any vessel appearing, and Careswell resolved the third evening to ascend the river. The oars and rowlocks were wound with canvas to muffle sound, the arms were carefully examined, and both boats pulled past the two-gun battery, in the shadow of the bank, so near that the voices of the guards could be heard. The boats went on hour after hour, struggling against the strong current, and the men scrutin-

ized every bush, stump, and tree trunk along the bank. Rifles and revolvers were grasped a dozen times to fire at some object that had the semblance of a man. The men were ready to face danger, but they shrank from exposure in an open boat to fire from a hidden foe. Their ignorance of the country, the silence maintained, the darkness beneath the forest-covered banks, and the uncertainty of when and where they might be attacked, caused apprehension and anxiety.

Careswell's boat was far in advance of Ashton's. On turning a bend in the river three miles up, a camp-fire was seen on Hickory Bluff, and a sloop was discovered at anchor abreast of it. Crane said, "It is customary for friends of the crew and a squad of riflemen to accompany a vessel to this point, to take leave and have a jollification, and the sloop will run out in the dark of the moon."

Where was the other boat? Careswell waited half an hour in the shadow of the bank, and then determined to attack the sloop alone. Four men were kept at the oars and ordered to remain in the boat with the pilot; the others were detailed to follow him on board the sloop with carbines ready. The boat was run to the outer side of the

craft that she might protect it from shore firing, and Careswell and his men sprang on board. The deck was deserted. He rushed to the cabin gangway and shouted, "Come up out of there!"

A negro ran his woolly head against the cold muzzle of Careswell's revolver, dropped on his knees and cried piteously, "Mercy, Marse! Mercy! Lawd 'a mercy! Don't shoot a po' nigger! Oh! Marse Linkum, don't shoot!"

"I'm not Lincoln. Tell me the truth and I'll spare you," said the lieutenant sternly.

"Yas, Marse! I done tell de whole truf!"

"Is there any one except yourself on this vessel?"

"No, Marse."

"Where is the crew?"

"On shore, Marse; sayin' good-bye to de wimmin folks."

"How many men are they?"

"Thar'se Cap'n Money, an' Marse Brown, an' Marse ——."

"Never mind the names; how many?"

"Five, Marse."

"Who else is with them on shore?"

"De wimmin folks an' some ob de reg'laters."

"How many men altogether?"

"I specs' 'bout twenty."

"Have they guns?"

"Yas, Marse, de reg'laters has."

"What is the name of this vessel?"

"De Record, Marse."

"What have you in the hold?"

"Some yams an' eight an' half bales ob cotton."

"Well enough! You get into my boat now and keep quiet."

The darkey was ash color, he trembled violently, and watched anxiously every movement of his companions.

"Men, two of you slip the cable and hoist the jib! The rest of you lie flat on the deck!" ordered Careswell sharply, as he took the tiller.

The rattle of the hanks, as the jib went up the stay, was heard on shore; the half drunken carousers discovered something was wrong and shouted, "Heah! Yo' nigger, what yo' doin' thar?"

No answer was returned, the jib was drawn to windward, and the craft turned slowly towards the channel. The keel dragged over the muddy bottom, the mainsail was quickly hoisted, puffs

of land breeze filled it, and the sloop moved steadily toward the middle of the river.

The crew on shore had crowded into a boat and started for her, but they sprang on shore, when the heavy mainsail went up, because they knew strangers were in charge. Then the crowd on shore opened fire on the vessel, and a hail of buckshot and bullets whistled across the deck, cutting the rigging and wounding several of the captors.

The men came out of the boat and she was towed astern, and Careswell shouted, " Now give it to them, my lads! " as he emptied his revolver upon the enemy. The shore fire slackened immediately, the rebels sought cover behind the trees, and the camp-fire was deserted. A few more shots were exchanged until the Record struck the strong current of the channel and got out of range. She passed out of the river near the left bank, undetected by the sentinels of the fort, and anchored near the Nautilus before dark. The Union flag at the peak waved above the flag of Dixie. Ashton's boat was not seen. Her disappearance was incomprehensible, and fears were expressed that she had been captured. The white cots of the sick-bay received one man wounded

in the neck, and another shot through the hand, but Careswell did not mention a buckshot in his own side.

The cutter was prepared for immediate return to the head of the harbor in search of the missing boat, and Careswell insisted on his right to command her. The country was aroused by the raid, and it was feared Ashton would continue up river and meet disaster. The cutter got off and reached the mouth of the river at nine o'clock at night; she passed the fort undiscovered, crossed to a wharf on the left bank, and there lay the second cutter with her crew fast asleep.

Ashton had pulled up river until the men were exhausted, and, hearing the firing above him, had concluded Careswell had been captured, and that he had better retreat to the wharf and await developments. They had kept vigilant watch for hours, and, finally, succumbed to the drowsy god. He and his crew were chagrined at news of the fight and capture of the sloop, and were eager to atone for their failure.

A council was held, Careswell and Crane thought the capture of the sloop would lead the Regulators to believe the object of the expedition had been accomplished; they would be off their

guard, and a further exploration up river might be made in comparative safety. Else, why was the camp-fire out at Fort Winder? The arms were examined, the crews took their respective boats, and a steady advance was made until dawn. Then the boats were drawn into a mangrove labyrinth upon the shore of an island, and the tent was pitched farther inland, where smoke would mingle with the morning mist and the forest and not be noticed. The men rejoiced over their hot coffee and good rations, pickets were relieved regularly, Crane watched the river from a great pine-tree, and the day passed in rest and sleep.

The boats were manned at dark and the ascent of the river continued cautiously. When a branch was seen, one boat remained at its mouth on guard, and the other went up as far as possible and took in tow or destroyed with axes all boats at the landings. The tows were collected and anchored in the middle of the river, as the expedition approached its forks.

Fort Morgan consisted of some earthworks and two log cabins, situated upon the point between the branches and built by the soldiers of the Seminole War. The point was hummock land, easily reached by boats and teams from the sur-

rounding country, and was considered the head of navigation, where vessels loaded and unloaded. A guard of irregular soldiers occupied the cabins and protected the landing, and Crane thought there might be ten or fifteen men guarding vessels loading or loaded with cotton.

The cutters were pulled to a fallen tree and a plan of attack made. It was dark along the river. The stars were veiled by clouds. A gentle breeze moved the mossy branches of pine and cypress and the broad palmetto leaves. No sound was heard except the breaking of sticks beneath the feet of wild animals, and the splashes and grunts of alligators. The men examined their revolvers and carbines, girded their sword-belts tighter, and piled their coats beneath the seats. The two bow oarsmen crouched low with rifles ready; the coxswains and officers grasped their revolvers, and Careswell whispered the order, "Give way!" The boats advanced in the shadows of the farther banks until opposite their landing places; Careswell, up the right branch, Ashton, up the left; then, landings were cautiously made upon opposite sides of the point. Two men were left to guard each boat, and the crews deployed in single file across the point until they

exchanged the countersign, "Seward," and united; then, facing the fort, they advanced and enveloped it. Not a rebel was seen, not a shot was fired. The camp-fire was a bed of live coals; the rude beds upon the cabin floors were still warm; men's and women's clothing was scattered here and there; camp utensils, provisions and ammunition had been abandoned in the hasty flight, and there was not a bale of cotton nor a vessel at the point.

The fall of an oar in Ashton's boat had given warning of the attack, and the Regulators had run away before the trap had closed. Pursuit would have been madness. The men had hidden in the forest, or were retreating into the country. If they had been good soldiers, they would have found cover in the edge of the forest and shot the sailors at their leisure. The latter were wretched marksmen, and clumsy fighters on land.

Pickets remained across the point from boat to boat. A squad destroyed a skiff and a flat-boat, and took position behind a cabin. Careswell and Crane held council for the future. Crane said, "Lieutenant, I have a sister living up the road a mile, whom I should like to surprise by a visit. She is for the Union cause and can give me much

information. I know all the cattle paths and could be back in an hour.

Careswell was cautious and suspicious, but he wished to learn if there were any vessels up the branches, and how many soldiers there were along the river. He knew, if Crane should be captured, he would be hung as a spy and traitor, and he consented to let him go. He was given the countersign, "Lincoln," and passed through the picket line.

CHAPTER XIII.

"A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
And gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air;
A dismal beacon—"

It was a dreary watch that night, forty miles from the ship and far into the enemy's country, and Careswell went several times from boat to boat along the picket line, anxious and impatient over the slow passage of time. Once there came on the wind a baying of hounds, and the melancholy sounds made the picket guard fearful and more alert.

"What is the time?" asked Ashton of Careswell.

"One o'clock, and he has been gone an hour."

"Halt! Who goes there?" called a picket sharply.

"A friend with the countersign," was the answer.

The officers drew their revolvers and the sharp

clicks of cocking rifles were heard along the picket line.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!"

"Lincoln!", and Crane passed into the camp and was welcomed.

"Lieutenant, we must get away from here as soon as possible," said Crane; "there is hard riding on all the roads. A courier has gone to Tampa for help. The whole country will be in arms by daylight, and we may have difficulty in getting out of the river. I will tell you more on board the boat."

"O, you are a civilian, Crane, and don't count my twenty-five brave men, armed with rifles and revolvers."

"That may be, but they are not bushwhackers and dead shots."

A cautious embarkation was made and the boats went down the river faster than they had ascended, towing the captured skiffs. Crane communicated the news he had received from his sister.

"There are no blockade-runners above Fort Morgan. The ten Regulators of the fort have retreated to a house three miles back from the river. The people are excited and angry over

the capture of the sloop, and are to meet this coming day at Johnson's plantation, two miles below the point, to determine how more effectually to defend the river. The meeting will be a failure because the boats are gone, and the rivers are not fordable. It would take days to ride round their head-waters. The plantation is a place for storage of supplies for blockade-runners and the army. It is the headquarters of the Regulators, and a rendezvous for all the rough riders of the region. Deeds of valor are related there, and acts of treason hatched. Its destruction would be justifiable by the laws of war, and it would be a fitting climax to this expedition."

Careswell resolved to destroy the place, and the crews supported the idea enthusiastically. The captured skiffs were anchored; the cutters went up an inlet and landed, where a road began that led to the clearing; five men were left to defend the boats; the others marched along the road through giant pines, with water often up to their knees, and Careswell and Crane leading. They halted at the cleared land and planned the attack. Ashton and his crew were to deploy in the edge of the woods, surround the clearing, and permit no one to pass. Master's mate Carey and three

men were to search the outbuildings, ascertain their contents and seize all persons discovered. Careswell left Crane hidden near the road, and, with four men approached the mansion to capture its occupants.

Two hounds rushed at the invaders and were beaten back with cutlasses. The clearing was quickly surrounded, and the squads ran to the buildings. Carey found the cook-house and the smoke-house full of provisions, took three men prisoners, and marched to the front of the house. Careswell detailed two men to force the back door, while he and two men went in by the front one. They entered, revolvers in hand, and saw two men sitting up in bed and staring wildly. They reached for their revolvers, but a stern command to get out of bed, and the menace of three pistols, hastened their movements and cowed them. They were placed under guard outside with the other prisoners, and search of the house was continued. A few arms were found; two trunks filled with women's clothes, were put outside the house, and all the buildings were given to the flames.

The pine structures burned fiercely; the flames shot upward a hundred feet; the light illuminated

the clearing and cast a wierd glamour over the blue uniforms, polished arms and awe-struck faces of the sailors. The pickets were called in, the men formed two abreast in the road, and every one looked towards the seven burning buildings. The log houses were pictured in flames. The frame of the mansion spread its fiery beams across the dark pines beyond. Suddenly, a column of flame shot upwards, a loud roar filled the air, the house timbers flew to the farthest parts of the clearing, and only shattered foundation walls remained. The prisoners said, "A keg of powder beneath the house has exploded." Thus arson was excused and justified.

The order was given to march, the boats were found safe, and the men were embarked immediately. Streaks of dawn were creeping up the eastern sky. The old boats were taken in tow; the cutters sped down the southern side of the river; Fort Winder fired a few harmless charges of cannister shot across the water, and, under oars and sail, the brave marauders sailed out into the great Charlotte Harbor.

There would be no martial array at Johnson's Plantation that day—the alligators in the rivers

would prevent—and the leader was a prisoner in the hands of the detested Yankees.

Notwithstanding the sailors' songs and the man-of-war strokes of the oars, the nine boats approaching the ship at dusk caused excitement and apprehension on board of her.

"Boats ahoy!" came a sharp hail from Mr. Lawson.

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered Careswell, the proper reply to indicate that a wardroom officer was in charge.

"Keep off, or I will fire into you!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

The men lay on their oars and the boats stopped. What did this rough reception mean? Every one was astonished.

"What boats are those?" asked Lawson.

"Two cutters of the Nautilus and seven captured rebel boats, sir!" replied Careswell.

"Very well, sir. You may come alongside, and leave the other boats in charge of Mr. Ashton."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The cutter touched the starboard gangway and Careswell stepped jauntily down upon the deck. He saluted Lawson and said, "I report myself

and boats returned, sir." He noticed Lawson wore his sword, the crew was at general quarters, and the guns were run out and depressed.

"You will report to the captain, sir!" said Lawson curtly.

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied Careswell; then, he saluted the captain and said, "I report myself and crews returned, sir, after a most successful expedition."

"Mm! You will consider yourself under arrest, sir. Go to your room!" replied the captain, returning the salute coldly.

The young officer was astonished at this extraordinary reception, and looked at some of his comrades at stations for explanation and sympathy, but they were frigid and indifferent, and he went to his stateroom and cursed in moderation. He heard the battery secured, the men dismissed from quarters, and the boats hoisted to the davits, then went to sleep.

"May I come in?" asked Surgeon McMasters, an hour later, pushing the portière aside and entering the room.

"Who? What? Hold the boat! Look out for snakes in the camp, men. Oh, that's you, Sawbones? How did you come up the bay?"

muttered Careswell, sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"Up the bay, be hanged! You are at home again—on board ship. I've brought you something for the fever—drink it down! You cannot knock about these Florida rivers without an antidote for malaria," said the doctor, and he held the glass until the docile patient swallowed a vile dose of quinine and whisky.

"You're a good fellow, Doctor, but you give some horrible doses," sputtered Careswell, after catching his breath.

"Have to; you fellows stay out too much in the rain and the night air. Now, here's a glass of sherry to take the bitter taste away, and you will be all right in the morning. I'm glad to see you back safe. We thought you were gobbled by the Rebs."

"Thank you, Doctor. How are the wounded men?"

"Fine as silk. Had to amputate Smith's arm—wrist smashed."

"Poor fellow! That's terrible! Will he get well?"

"Oh, yes. He says, 'I don't mind the loss

of my hand, but I hate like the devil to go home and not have another crack at Johnny Reb.'"

"True grit; how is Wilcox?"

"Getting on. A neck wound is extremely painful."

"I suppose. I have a little scratch that needs attention. Several bullets went through my coat, but I only stopped one of them."

"Caramba! And you went back on the second expedition with that puncture! If the bullet had gone half an inch deeper, it would have killed you. Why didn't you tell me of this injury, when you returned the first time?"

"Because I wished to go back and rescue Ashton. I tipped out the bullet with my penknife, and kept the hole covered with oakum."

"Good treatment. You are a deceitful, reckless cuss! You gave us a big scare. We thought you had been captured, and the flotilla you brought down to-night was full of rebels to attack the ship. We went to quarters and, if you had not answered correctly, you would have had grape and cannister for supper."

"I noticed the ship was bristling with arms and you all looked scared. Didn't you hear my men singing, 'Landlord fill the flowing bowl,

etc.,' as they have done many times on board ship?"

"Yes, but it looked suspicious."

"Nonsense! Am I under arrest for scaring you?"

"No; but for disobeying orders. You were ordered to rescue the second cutter and to return immediately, but you overstayed your time and made a daring raid into the enemy's country. We have learned of it from Crane. It will go down to the credit of yourself and the Nautilus. The captain will forgive you, and the commodore will get a glowing report."

"The navy will go to the dogs, if an officer cannot exercise his judgment in emergencies. I seized the opportunity to clear out the river. I would like to see it attempted to-morrow. Fort Winder has been reinforced and a hundred cavalry from Tampa now patrol the river banks. Servility to tradition is a curse of the service. If an officer must follow the letter of his orders and not their spirit, farewell all ambition, all hope of glory."

"There is too much red-tape, too much jealousy of the high prerogative of rank. Things

will not be better as long as a merchant, a lawyer or a politician is selected for Secretary," observed the doctor, as he finished dressing the slight wound.

The paymaster appeared at the door in night-shirt. "I just wished to give you a hand-shake, Careswell. I want to tell you how unjust I think the captain has acted. Crane has told us of the perilous raid, and the captain already regrets his hasty judgment. You will get justice in the morning," said he.

"Thanks, my dear fellow; this is only my second arrest. My first was for fighting; I hit a middy at General Quarters because he insinuated I was not a gentleman. Funny—Captain Craven put him under arrest too for not striking back."

"Pay, we mustn't keep Careswell awake; he is feverish, fatigued and wounded," said the surgeon.

"Wounded? Not seriously, I hope."

"No, but—Good night."

"Good night, my lad; I will pray for you."

Careswell awoke at nine o'clock feeling stiff and stupid, and was greeted cordially by his brother officers. He was called to the cabin after

his late breakfast, and Captain Preston shook his hand cordially and said, "I am glad to see you. I relieve you from arrest. My anxiety for your safety made me resentful, when I learned you had wilfully disobeyed orders; but you acted with discretion and courage, and I congratulate you on the success of your expedition."

"I think you were hasty, sir; but I forgive you," replied Careswell graciously.

The gentlemen talked long over their sherry, and harmonious relations were fully restored. It was decided to keep a boat at the mouth of Peace River, and that Careswell should take the Record to Key West with dispatches to the commodore.

An open sailboat with a cargo of one barrel of turpentine and a crew of two men was captured next day off La Costa Island. She was probably the smallest blockade-runner of the war.

The week had been eventful and exciting, and Careswell remembered it, because it was his last in that wild, romantic, mosquitoish region.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Landlord fill the flowing bowl
Until it doth run over,
For to-night, we'll merry, merry be,
* * * * *
And to-morrow we'll get sober."

THE sloop Record sailed for Key West early Monday, and, as cotton was selling at two dollars a pound, she brought much prize money to her captors. The Nautilus was relieved on her station by another ship, and picked up Careswell and his men at the Key. There was great rejoicing over the receipt from Havana of long delayed letters, and news of glorious achievements by the navy and the army.

The activity of a greatly increased United States Navy, the destruction of Confederate cruisers, the closer observance of neutrality by European nations, and the cautious movements of Northern commercial vessels, disheartened the Confederates. Tennessee and Virginia were the

great battle-grounds since the Mississippi had been opened and Gettysburg won, and the cordon of glittering arms and gray ships was surely strangling the Southern Confederacy.

The fleet was covered with flags by day and brilliant with lights by night. Stories, songs and instrumental music, were heard on every ship; Union victors and victories were toasted in cabins and camps, and prospects of going home eagerly discussed. There was merriment ashore and afloat. The steerage officers were invited into the wardroom; the great punch bowl was filled, and there was much good fellowship. Bloss was in his element. He never refused an invitation to dinner, although his uniform coat was becoming smaller and shabbier day by day. His jokes, quips and stories, however, seemed inexhaustible.

"Ah! Careswell, I see your letters are thin—they must be very sweet," remarked Bloss, as the mail was distributed.

"They are not as fat as those Phillis sends to his sweetheart. He fills several sheets of foolscap every steamer."

"Oh, most men are spoony. The girls write little, but mean much."

"'I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which like a creed ne'er says all it intends;
But full of cunning like Ulysses' whistle
When he allured poor Dolan; you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.'"

"Well, take care what you answer to Madam's. I saw her delicate envelope and waxen seal."

The laughter in the wardroom did not embarrass Bloss, who replied,

"I will write her a sonnet
About her new bonnet;
I'll enclose a caress
For her beautiful dress,"

"Say, Bloss," said Ashton, "I had an experience to-day. I went walking with a lady in a garden, and she picked some orange blossoms, held a spray above her head and asked, 'Is it becoming?' I replied, 'Certainly it is.' Then she sighed and murmured, 'I suppose I will never wear them,' and I was scared."

"You susceptible fellows will have to be careful. The Northern school-teachers, and the eligible maidens of Florida, are after us. I know of several alliances here, which will not meet approval at home."

"You fellows are always harping about the women. The true Southern lady would not marry an enemy of her dear Confederacy," said Hunting.

"I am not so sure of that; they may nurse their wrath a while, but, in the end, embrace their conquerors."

"We shall see."

"The executive says, we must paint the hull lead color to correspond with the other vessels of the navy," said Careswell.

"The Department is crazy. We have prepared to put on a disguise as an Englishman at short notice, and now comes an order for Quaker colors to match fog and mud banks. The next thing will be to paint vessels that sail among verdant islands, green; those that cruise along rocky shores, brown, and the deep sea cruisers, blue. Then one can sing,

> "I once sailed in an old lime-juicer,
> Now I belong to a dark blue cruiser;
> I get good grub and plenty of grog,
> And I'm a merry old sea-dog."

Lieutenant Bloss' rhyme was received with laughter and cheers.

"Did you hear the news about Coffin?" asked Lawson.

"No sir; what is it?" asked several officers.

"Coffin had been left at Punta Rasa in the small sloop Rosalie, having one 12-pounder and a small crew, to blockade the Caloosahatchie River and threaten Fort Myers.

"This relic of the Seminole War had been made habitable, and garrisoned by a company of native refugees under Captain Crane. The men had proved unreliable and had been withdrawn after a fight with Regulators, in which the Rosalie's gun saved the outpost. Twenty Regulators came down one night in the sloop Georgie and attacked her. The river current carried the craft astray, a sharp fight followed, the vessel got aground, and her men took to the woods in a shower of cannister from the Rosalie's howitzer. Coffin seized the prize and arrived here last night with the two vessels. The commodore has promoted him to Acting Ensign, and he is to have the Sea Bird and a roving commission for up the coast. If you want promotion, you must fight for it," replied Lawson.

"Coffin has dropped into notice like the man

from the royal yard," said Howard. "He lost his hold and tumbled; struck a stay and turned over; caught a moment on a buntline; brought up sharply on a lift, and came down upon his feet unhurt in front of the captain, who was walking the quarter-deck. The latter jumped back and shouted, 'Where in H——! did you come from?'"

"'From the north of Ireland, sir;' replied the man, saluting."

After the laughter had quieted, Bloss remarked, "Coffin came from 'behint Nantucket Pint.' You may depend upon it, gentlemen, New England furnishes the best sailors of our navy."

"That reminds me of a dear relative," said Lawson. "I had an aunt, who made a voyage in a schooner from Boston to Portland. The craft beat all night against a northeast wind, and the old lady was much disturbed. 'I do not want any of my kin to go to sea,' said she. 'Every little while during that awful night the sailors were called to turn the vessel around, but there were two men, who were worked nearly to death, poor fellows, Ready About and Hard A. Lee.'"

Shouts of laughter greeted this nautical story and Bloss repeated,

"My aunt! My poor deluded aunt!
Her hair is almost gray!
Why will she train that winter curl,
In such a spring like way?"

"I was in the Caribbean Sea on my way home from a China cruise, when I saw a total eclipse of the sun," said McMasters. "It was one of those clear, balmy days that render the latitude of the southeast trade winds so delightful. Silver-gray clouds chased across the sky. The sun shone brightly upon the deep blue of the island sea. Gulls circled above the ship's foaming wake. Mother Carey's chickens flitted near the stern to catch the stewards' crumbs. The stately frigate rolled and dipped to port and to starboard in courtesy to the summer billows.

"At 10 a. m., a somber shadow spread over the sea; the clouds and sky became purple; a gray disk slid across the sun, and the bright orb was soon covered by the lead-colored moon, which was framed in a corona of fiery needles and rose-pink flames. Stars glimmered around us; the birds settled upon the waves to sleep, and the ship seemed to travel sideways at a

terrific speed. We were in the hundred and fifty mile wide path of the moon's shadow. Every one was filled with awe at the phenomena, and faces turned skyward had a livid pallor.

"The dead moon lay in the crescent arms of the sun awhile, and was then slowly pushed away into invisibility. The stars faded; the birds began their flight; bright sunlight banished the shadow from the sea, and a weight was lifted from our hearts."

"Bravo! Doctor. That is a beautiful description. You were very fortunate in seeing one of the wonders of the Universe," said the paymaster in the applause.

Hines, of the engineers, followed with a tale of the donkey, that the marine was told was kept in the hold to drink all the bilge water. When the curious ship-soldier went down to see him, he was introduced to a donkey-engine.

Middy Ferguson told of Buttons, the hospital steward, who went on a cruise in the Plymouth with the midshipmen of two classes. "You know Buttons, who used to dose us with a tumbler of senna and salts, when we went to the hospital with a headache to escape a hard lesson. He served the grog on board ship, you know.

He always put a pint pot of it under a gun just behind his tub for his own mess, that of the warrant officers forward; then he handed a tin tot (a gill) to each man, as he came under the rope and round the main-mast.

"Some men were doubling on him one day, and he watched them closely in order to catch the guilty ones. When he had finished serving, he lowered his tub into the storeroom, locked the hatch, carried his pot of rum forward, and soon discovered that it had turned into water. He fumed and swore and interviewed many sailors and midshipmen, but without getting any clue to the guilty miracle workers. Who took Buttons' tangle-foot has long been an academic question."

"Glad he got paid for his vile medicine. The midshipmen did it of course. They thus avenged themselves for his official cruelty at the hospital," said Ashton.

"The engineers would never let such an opportunity be lost," said McMasters.

"The powder-monkeys are always on the watch for such opportunities," said Phillis.

"It was the ship's cat," declared another speaker; and a majority agreed with this de-

cision, because a cat always gets the blame for everything that goes wrong on board ship, although this ship hadn't any cat on board.

"We had fun crossing the equator, when I returned from the coast of Africa," said Lieutenant Kautz. "An amateur band led a procession of monkeys, donkeys, clowns, warriors and courtiers around the ship. Neptune came over the bow in flowing locks and majestic mien, and received the homage of the paraders, who marched once more about the deck. Then His Majesty, using a gun-carriage for a throne, received men, who had never before crossed the line (equator), lathered them with a paint-brush, shaved them with a piece of iron hoop, ducked them in a canvas-made pool, and greeted them, finally, as his worthy subjects. An extra good dinner was served, and the entire day was devoted to fun and frolic."

"I have been there," said Lawson. "Sailors display great ingenuity in making imitation animals with canvas, leather, swabs, ropeyarns, and tarpaulins, and their theatrical costuming is often quite wonderful."

It was near midnight, and the gentlemen were drinking a toast to "a sailor's lassie," when the

forecastle and the binnacle bells rang rapidly, ding-ding-ding, and shouts rang through the ship, "Fire in the fore-hold!" The convivial party broke up immediately; the gentlemen turned pale, ran to their rooms, belted on their side-arms, and rushed to their several stations about the ship. The sailors poured up the hatchways, scurried about the decks, and began the duties of their stations. The captain and the executive were already upon the bridge, and the latter was shouting orders rapidly. Each officer, with a squad of men, had a special division of labor to perform. Hose was unreeled and led out, pumps were manned, streams of water poured into the fore-hatch and the magazine passages, the magazine was flooded by opening its stopcocks, and the boats were provisioned, watered, and furnished with logbooks, charts, compasses, chronometers, sextants and flags. The smoke and flames drove the men aft; it was considered impossible to save the ship, and officers and men were ordered into the boats, the executive overseeing everything. The captain came over the gangway last, lifted his cap sorrowfully, as he took a parting survey, and said to Lawson, "Are all embarked, sir?"

"Aye, aye, sir; all are safe in the boats."

"Shove off!" said the captain.

"Shove off!" repeated the officer of each boat.

Oars fell; strong strokes sent the boats a cable's length away from the burning ship; the stars were shining brightly; there was not a breath of wind; and the Nautilus was entirely deserted, a fiery wreck upon the motionless sea.

The spirited movement had been executed with such precision and regularity, and the men were so perfect in their duties, that the time from the ringing of the fire-alarm until the boats had reached a safe distance from the ship was only eight minutes.

The Nautilus was not on fire; no smoke and flames were visible; the magazine had not been flooded; it was not impossible to save the ship, and abandonment by the crew was not necessary. It was a case of make-believe in order to test the efficiency of men and officers in the "Fire Drill." The captain knew the most of the men and officers were dressed and awake, and had ordered the officer-of-the-deck to give the signal. It was some minutes before the alarmed crew

became confident there was no fire, and perceived the motive and humor of their commander.

The boats returned to the ransomed ship, the stores and equipments were removed after hoisting to davits, the decks were cleared, and the men off watch turned into their dream-bags or their bunks, with senses alert for any summons.

CHAPTER XV.

"Slow sailed the weary mariners and saw
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold;——"

CARESWELL had the mid-watch and Harrington was quartermaster, and the two men walked about the quarter-deck active and vigilant, watching ship and shore, and occasionally tarrying by the binnacle for conversation, as young officers and old salts were accustomed to do in the strenuous sixties.

"These are dull times for fighting men, Lieutenant," observed the sailor.

"Yes; we are only dispensers of charity to these worthless refugees, who swear allegiance to the United States in order to get our good rations. They would betray us to the Confederates any time for better grub. I do not believe in this purchased loyalty."

"Nor I. The beggars cannot read nor write; they do not know the meaning of an oath except a cuss-word; but they know which is the winning side well enough.—I wish I had a family."

"You? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes; this is my last year for Uncle Sam. I'm saving my pay and intend to buy a farm, get a little, clipper-built woman for a wife, and enjoy shore life the rest of my days."

"Settle down to raising pigs and potatoes, eh? An old barnacle like you couldn't do much on shore. You would hanker all the time for a whiff of tarred rope and a smell of bilge-water."

"O, I would have a sailboat; live in sight of the sea, and watch the vessels sailing past."

"Every sailor longs for a farm. The smell of dirt is delicious to him. Scurvy is cured by it. I have seen a man off a long voyage eat it ravenously. But the fever passes; there is a rollicking time on shore until the money is spent, then Jack enlists for another voyage," and Careswell laughed.

Harrington looked sober and said, "There are many fool sailors, but others help educate a

sister, set up a brother in business, support a widowed mother, or give the old man a lift."

"Rather scarce, old man," said Henderson, boatswain's mate, who stood near the others. "We are on shore like fish out of water, bleareyed and dirty. It's our business to sail the ships over the world, and that of other men to plow, sow, reap and 'tend the cattle. I would rather weigh anchor than pry out a stump; tar down a stay than hoe a row of corn; and reef topsails in a gale of sweet wind, than feed pigs and be poisoned by their stink."

"Oh, go away, young man. Wait till you've been to sea as long as I have, then you may talk," replied Harrington scornfully.

"How long is that, Harrington?" asked Careswell.

"Going on nineteen years; twelve years in Her Majesty's service and seven in ours."

"Ours? Then you claim the United States of America, as your country?"

"Yes, sir; I mean to stand by my oath."

"Why did you change your allegiance?"

"I was tired of a country, where the poor are trodden under foot, and of a navy in which men are whipped like dogs."

"Suppose we should have war with Great Britain, where would you be?"

"Behind a Yankee gun, sir. No watered grog and cat-o'-nine-tails for me, sir."

"We have many British sailors in our navy."

"Yes, sir; and they hold the same opinions I do. Uncle Sam gives good grub and regular grog, and treats us like men."

"Eight-bells, sir," said the quartermaster, touching his cap.

"Very well, make it so. Tell the boatswain's mate to call the watch and you 'wake Mister Bloss."

The binnacle bell rang the hour; the forecastle bell repeated it; the lookouts called, "Starboard cathead, port cathead, starboard gangway, and port gangway;" the mate's whistle sounded in the main hatchway, and he shouted, "All the starboard watch!" then the men came on deck grumbling; the port watch went below; Bloss relieved Careswell of the deck; listened to the orders, and all became quiet except the steady tramp of the men on watch.

It was pleasant and peaceful outside of the Confederacy, and Bloss dozed as he walked the deck; occasionally stumbling against the steps

or tumbling over a gun-carriage. Suddenly he noticed the lookout at the stern was fast asleep and leaning over the spanker boom. He picked up a rope's end and awoke the lad by applying it vigorously to his legs.

"Sleep on watch, will you? You young rascal!" growled he, while the boy danced a hornpipe to the falling blows.

"I couldn't sleep below, sir; the mosquitoes were very hungry," cried Dyer, removing his cap.

"Take advantage of my back being turned to neglect your duty! Lie across the boom in the heavy dew and dream of home, while the enemy might come up under the stern and blow us out of water! Get astraddle of the boom and stay there till eight-bells! You ought to be hung!"

Bloss spoke very sternly and winked at Quartermaster Brenneman, who helped the culprit to mount. This prompt punishment was more humane than court-martial and confinement in the brig on bread and water. "Keep a sharp lookout! Don't you shut an eye!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied Dyer, now thoroughly awakened.

Bloss played with Brenneman's pet coon and

let him tear his trousers in order to keep his own eyes open, and reflected on the difference between moral suasion and the persuasion of a rope's end.

"Poor fellows! they do have a hard time," he muttered. "When they were freezing in the Delaware, we had a hot shot heated in the fire-room and kept in a tub of sand in the wardroom. When they were sweltering in the West Indies, we were cooled by windsails and iced sherry cobblers. Now, the mosquitoes torture them, and we get in behind netting and sleep peacefully."

He stopped by a howitzer and said, "Dyer, come down. Are you sorry you slept on watch?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you promise never to do it again?"

"I will try, sir."

"Very well. Go and call the ship's cooks and the stewards—it is nearly four-bells."

"Aye, aye, sir;" replied the youth, grateful for relief from a disgraceful punishment, and glad of the opportunity of calling the cooks, because he knew they would give him some hot coffee.

"Four-bells," said the grizzly-gray quarter-

master, who recognized Bloss' good heart and smiled upon him like a father.

"Make it so! Pierce, tell the boatswain's mate to get up the buckets, brooms and holystones, and wash down decks, scrub the paint, and scour the brass-work. Ask the engineer to get up his ashes, and the gunner's mate to attend to the battery."

"Aye, aye, sir;" the whistle sounded and the orders were shouted through the ship.

Bloss took off his shoes and stockings, rolled up his pants, and pattered around the deck looking after all the work. The firemen hoisted and dumped the ashes overboard; the gunner's mate cleaned the guns; the boys scoured the brasses, and the sailors sprinkled sand, dragged the holystones, and dashed, broomed and squilgeed water until the ship was as clean as a farm-house dresser. About six-bells, coffee and hardtack were served to each man, and Bloss put on his shoes. Then ropes were hauled taut, yards were squared, all hands stowed hammocks, the executive relieved the deck-officer to make his toilet, and the booby that roosted nightly on the fore-topsail yard-arm flew with a line of pelicans going over, and went to seek his breakfast. At eight-

bells, the watch below, having breakfasted, relieved the morning watch, which went below for its matutinal repast; an officer relieved Bloss, the colors were hoisted and saluted by drum and fife, and the Nautilus was the beauty of the fleet.

CHAPTER XVI.

"One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
* * * * *
They shriek'd because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head and sparkling eye,
Peer'd o'er the foaming spray——"

Rumors had reached the Nautilus that she was soon to change her squadron. Blockade-running in the Gulf had practically ceased; the regulators along the coast had withdrawn inland; the gophers had greatly diminished; the snipe and curlew were wilder; the alligators had learned to drop their noses beneath the water when they heard a sound of oars; the deer had been frightened away by the target practice of heavy guns, and men and officers were anxious for change and an opportunity to meet the enemy. As certain ship-work indicated preparation for early departure, it was decided to give

a party on board in acknowledgment of the many social functions, which had been generously given by the shore people.

Flags were draped about the gangway and across the deck, colored lanterns were hung along the bulwarks, the starboard steerage was assigned for a gentlemen's dressing-room, the wardroom was decorated for a banquet-hall, the captain abandoned his cabin to the ladies, and a space between two guns was appropriated by the musicians, who were all amateurs selected from the crew. The crew was ordered into white shirts and trousers; and the officers dressed in full uniform, with the exception of epaulettes, cocked-hats and side-arms. The boats were sent at seven o'clock to bring off the guests, and the after part of the ship was soon crowded with ladies and gentlemen. The lovely dresses, plain civilian suits, and military and naval uniforms, made beautiful color groupings in the white, blue, green and red lights of the battle and the signal lanterns. Witty speeches, happy repartees, and short stories caused joyous laughter, that awoke the solemn echoes of the broadsides and went rippling from gun to gun to the forward part of the ship.

The curious had to be satisfied, and the hosts conducted groups of guests over the ship, and explained everything marine and warlike.

"I do not see any castle at the forecastle," remarked Madam Fontana to Mr. Bloss.

"No, and there are not any cats although there are catheads," replied he, pointing to those timbers so necessary in catting an anchor.

"What great cannon! I should think it would require much powder to load them."

"It does; our rule is,

> "'Two midshipmen and a master's mate,
> Two round-shot and a stand of grape,
> Ram home the charge.'"

"Do you keep all powder and shell in the magazine?" asked Captain Hanson, of the artillery.

"Yes, except a small supply under the ward-room floor for the howitzers."

"What would you do in case of fire?"

"Put it out."

"Suppose you could not?"

"We would turn the stopcocks and flood the magazines."

"But the loaded shell might not be rendered harmless?"

"No, but the fire would probably drive us out of the ship before it could burn through the thick walls and zinc linings."

"Indeed! I'd rather have the ammunition farther away from the galley-range and the men's quarters."

"The fire in the range is put out before the magazine is opened for practice or battle. The ammunition passers in the magazine and its passages wear canvas slippers, and have no metal about their persons."

"That is interesting," said Miss Fortesque; "I suppose you do not do much cooking, as I know you buy baker's bread."

"Yes, in port; but I would be keel-hauled, if I did not provide cakes, pies, and luxuries," answered Hunting, who was caterer of the ward-room mess.

"What is keel-hauled?"

"Dragged along under the ship's bottom—a nautical way of drowning a man."

"Pay has charge of the teakettle halyards," added Howard.

"Oh, belay your jaw-tackle," responded Hunting scornfully.

"And the sailors hang upon the little beam-hooks to sleep?" questioned Miss Peterson.

"Yes; they sling their hammocks under the deck—they are lashed up and stowed by day in the nettings along the rail. They have not been 'piped down,' yet, as we wish the deck clear for visitors."

"I have heard you live on salt-horse and hard-tack," remarked Colonel Gordon, "and I remember what reply the meat in the kid made to the sailor, who asked, 'Old horse, old horse, how came you here?'

> "'From Saco Head to Portland Pier,
> I've carted stone this many a year,
> Till killed by sorrow and sore abuse,
> They've salted me down for sailors' use.'"

The ladies shuddered, the gentlemen laughed, and Hunting replied, "I think Uncle Sam's boys are fed better than packet-ship sailors."

"We had some alligator steaks last month, while in camp up river, and they tasted like a mixture of fish and crow," observed Careswell.

"They were as palatable as some porpoise cutlets we tried off Hatteras," added Ashton.

"Oh, what gourmands!" exclaimed Madam Burrit sarcastically.

"Such growlers, you should say," corrected Surgeon McMasters; "they complain of rations of beans and salt-cod, when we know these are essential to the happiness of New Englanders. Mister Ashton even complains of too many necks in the canned chicken."

"Yes, it is often neck or nothing," declared Ashton.

"Howard says, 'the Florida chickens (terrapin) haven't the flavor they have at home, in Baltimore,' when we know this state is the main source of supply to Marylanders."

The ladies thought the apothecary-room was too small; the sick-bay, with its white cots very cute; the brig for prisoners a chicken-coop; the semicircular top half-way up the mast wrongly named; the cooking arrangements excellent; the engines very complicated; the fire-room a dreadful place, and the staterooms just too sweet for anything.

One lady said, "The officers must be dreadful flirts, if all the pictures in their rooms are those of sweethearts," and, "Any lady might go to sea with pleasure in such comfortable quarters."

Such innocent observations were heard on

every side, and the old sailors, who stood around with caps in hand, smiled secretly and turned their quids in silent derision.

The discipline of the ship was maintained, men were on watch and stations as usual; Rockett was officer-of-the-deck, and the guests were pleased and a little awed by the naval paraphernalia.

The string band had played familiar airs, during the rambles of the people over the ship, and they now began upon the list of dances. Lancers, quadrilles, minuets, waltzes, polkas and reels were danced upon the quarter-deck and greatly enjoyed by guests and hosts, although some couples occasionally tripped on a rope or tumbled against a gun-carriage and caused considerable merriment. At intervals, one or more of the sailors danced a double-shuffle, a hornpipe, or a break-down, with a great deal of animation and flexibility; others sang nautical songs, played the concertina, the harmonica, the jew's-harp, the flute, the flageolet or the bones, and two nimble fellows gave an exhibition of their remarkable skill with wooden broadswords, to the delight of the assembly. Then the rolled and snugly lashed hammocks were "piped

down" by the boatswain's mate, and the happy guests went to supper down in the wardroom.

"It is little that makes the glad laugh," and the scenes and the merriment below deck may be readily imagined. The stewards had prepared a marvellous repast, considering the limited supplies at the Key; the wines were of the best vintages, and Paymaster Hunting blushed, when a messmate informed the guests that he had prepared the menu, and compliments were showered upon him.

Bloss asserted that Pay was entitled to great credit for the liberal supply of wines, as he was a rigid teetotaler himself, and then quoted,

"Ah, that's the way delusion comes—A glass of old Madeira,
A pair of visual diaphragms revolved by Jane or Sarah,
And down go vows and promises without the slightest question,
If eating words won't compromise the organs of digestion;"

which evoked much laughter and nearly gave Rockett an apoplexy.

The captain told of catching a jew-fish at Charlotte Harbor, which weighed two hundred and thirty-one pounds, and only his rank saved him from ridicule.

Lawson matched it by saying, he had caught a sheepshead, weighing ten pounds, by casting a line from the shore of Uzeppa Island.

Careswell told of a sanguinary battle in the starboard steerage between the captain's rooster and the pet coon, and the mysterious disappearance of the fowl was explained to the owner. "Boys must be boys," was the only comment made by the captain.

"I heard the Nautilus was to leave the Gulf, Captain. We shall greatly regret her departure," said Colonel Gordon.

"I hope we shall have active service somewhere. If we stay here much longer, we might ground on the beef bones. Since we put on Quaker color, I have wished to go where there would be few persons to see us."

"The Quakers are very good people. They are doing noble work in the Philadelphia hospitals, and contributing largely to the Sanitary Commission," remarked Careswell.

Other gentlemen told stories, or made witty speeches in response to toasts; some slipped away to the deck to smoke, and ladies sang to guitar accompaniments. Miss Montague sang *Ave Maria* with sweetness and feeling. When the

last note had ended and the tinkle of the guitar was stilled, a storm of applause filled the ship, and the captain offered thanks and praises. Yielding to urgent requests, she played a fantasia on the guitar that was enthusiastically received, and then busied herself looking over an album of photographs belonging to Careswell. During the excitement, Lawson and Captain Preston went quietly on deck.

"Short, spirited drills are to be encouraged," said the *Naval Manual,* but Lawson had them often and long. The guests were preparing to depart, when suddenly the sharp whistle of the fife and the rattle of the drum shocked the night air and caused consternation below decks.

"It is a call to General Quarters; you had better go on deck and see the maneuvers," said Hunting.

The officers seized their arms and hastened to their stations; the guests followed Colonel Gordon to the spar-deck. The flags were gone; men stood around the guns; sailors and marines were below and aloft; and the captain, the executive and the chief-engineer were upon the bridge. The quartermasters were busy with the signal lights and the steering wheels as if under way.

The officers wore swords and revolvers, and the men were variously armed with carbines, revolvers, cutlasses, etc. The executive gave orders through his trumpet; the broadside guns were cast loose, run out, and worked rapidly; the pivot guns were pivoted to starboard and to port, and pointed through gaps in the bulwarks; disabled guns were removed and replaced by good ones, and different colored Coston signals were burned in talking with other vessels. A fire was extinguished; shot-holes below the water-line were plugged, and the pumps were worked. Boarders crouched along the rail to repel boarders, or to board an enemy's ship; marines and sharpshooters kept up a rattling fire of rifles, and wounded men were carried on stretchers to the sick-bay. The sails were loosed, trimmed and furled; the ship was maneuvered in tacking, and wearing; the anchor was buoyed, and the cable slipped; a train was laid to blow up the ship, and the boats were made ready to abandon her.

The routine of drill under imaginary conditions lasted an hour; the broadside guns were discharged seventeen times in fifteen minutes; everything moved like clock-work, and the guests

were delighted, astonished and frightened, in turn.

The whole harbor was illuminated by rockets and signals, and, as a fitting climax, a quarter-deck howitzer was slyly loaded and suddenly discharged. It was so near and so unexpected, the ladies screamed and rushed into a compact group, thinking the magazine had exploded, and their lives were in danger. They chattered like magpies, laughed hysterically, and declared they had had a "perfectly lovely time."

Then the battery was secured, and the "Retreat" played by the drum and fife. The boats were called away, and the guests were set on shore just as eight-bells (midnight) was struck. Never had the people of Key West been so fêted. Never had a naval vessel given so unique an entertainment.

CHAPTER XVII.

"With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why."

THE next few days, the officers were busy getting the ship ready for sea, and receiving flowers, fruit, notes and party-calls from their friends. A day was devoted to farewell visits on shore, and many pretty eyes grew misty and many a dear heart ached, at the loosening of ties that should have been tightened by a holy service. But it is ever thus in life, making love and breaking vows, especially where gallant sailors wander over the world and lay plans for future happiness, for which the Navy Department has no consideration. There was no doubt Bloss had been struck in a vital part by lavender notes and guava jellies from Madam Fontana, but opinions differed, as to whether it was his heart or his stomach.

Careswell was charged with treachery towards the fisherman's daughter on Pine Island, and, also, to a lovely Kingfisher, a darling Creole, a pet of the Navy, from New Orleans.

"Salvini has wanted Careswell for a son-in-law ever since they talked French together. The old man had not heard his native tongue from a stranger since he left Corsica, twenty-eight years ago," remarked the doctor.

"I guess not; he wanted me to bring a schooner to Florida after the war to carry fresh fish to Havana. What a prospect for a naval officer!" said Careswell scornfully.

"He would expect you to marry Marie, of course. Propinquity would do the business for you."

"I do not fancy the life nor the alliance."

"You know the girl is lovely, and more intelligent than the average Floridian—

> "'A simple maiden in her flower
> Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.'"

"You are welcome to my chances, as I believe,

> "'Better twenty years of Europe,
> Than a cycle of Cathay.'"

"You fellows are all off. Miss Montague won Careswell's heart the night she sang *Ave Maria,*" said Phillis quietly.

"She won everybody's," said Careswell hotly, going into his room to escape observation and further badinage.

The next morning the good ship Nautilus put to sea. Flag salutes were given on every side, the man-of-war crews cheered, and a crowd upon the shore waved handkerchiefs, hats and umbrellas. The happy crew of the Nautilus responded with cheers and salutes, and a group of officers waved handkerchiefs and caps and watched their friends with glasses. As the little island sank, the wind freshened and formed three waterspouts. Their summits were in pouting storm-clouds, their bases in cones of swirling foam, and the columns twisted and swayed like monstrous serpents. A gun was loaded with solid shot to be fired through a spout, should it approach too near; but the precaution was needless, as the cyclones soon lost their force, the columns broke, the tops were sucked into the clouds, and the bases settled into billows of foam.

The weak and decrepit negro, Jacob, who had

been taken with the sloop Record, succumbed to malaria in the afternoon, and was buried in a clean hammock, weighted with scrap-iron. The good paymaster read the Episcopal burial service with much feeling, as the plank was tipped and the doubly freed slave plunged into the blue waves.

The ship skimmed along in the rapid current of the Gulf Stream, with sails spread and the screw hoisted, when the wind favored; or under the powerful revolutions of the screw, with sails furled at times, towards the most active theatre of naval operations, the coast of South Carolina. First to secede, first to defy national authority, first to fire upon the Union flag, the state was from first to last a battle-ground of fierce contests and persistent sieges.

The East Gulf Squadron's vessels blockaded the inlets and harbors of Florida from Pensacola to Key West, and cruised in the Straits of Florida and along the northern coast of Cuba, in order to capture the blockade-runners, which carried goods into and out of the southern Gulf ports in spite of naval vigilance. The inlets and the interior channels of Florida were traversed by vessels, which carried out turpentine, resin

and cotton, and brought back salt, coffee, matches, medicines, clothing and arms. Blockading was light and monotonous duty, in 1864, and officers and men were anxious to go where they could fight and win promotion and glory.

The South Atlantic Squadron blockaded and patrolled the coast from Cape Florida to Cape Fear. This division of the navy, co-operating with an investing army, was second only in importance, in its warlike operations, to the army of Virginia and its river gunboats, engaged in battles around Richmond.

The South had prepared for war long before Secession; and accumulation of war materials in Southern arsenals, and detention of naval vessels in Southern ports, gave evidence of foresight, as commendable from one point of view, as it was treasonable from another. She gained vast stores and three thousand cannon, when the Norfolk Navy Yard was abandoned by its timid garrison. These enabled the recreant officers of the old navy and army to prepare the Southern coast for defence. They removed buoys and beacons, obstructed channels and harbors, extinguished lighthouses, planted and floated torpedoes, built forts, and mounted guns. The in-

lets, channels, river banks, and harbor shores, frowned with fortifications and bristled with cannon. Two, three, six-gun batteries menaced the passage of vessels, and brave men stood behind the guns and watched the sea. It was pitiful how the little forts were abandoned or destroyed, when the Union gunboats came groping their way over the bars and up the shallow estuaries, and opened a withering fire from heavy guns. They swept away all opposition quickly, and drove the garrisons inland to larger fortifications. Many batteries answered not, and landing parties found them deserted, and their guns removed or destroyed.

The Atlantic coast was mostly in possession of the Northern forces, in 1864. Union troops were stationed at Jupiter, St. Augustine, Jacksonville, Fernandina, Tybee Island, Hilton Head, Beaufort, Morris Island and St. Helena Sound. Naval vessels co-operated with the island forts in forming a menacing line between inland and the sea.

The Confederates stood to their guns at Fort McAllister, on Great Ogeechee; on the Savannah, and the Wilmington Rivers; on Green Island; around Wassaw Sound, and at Grahamville.

They defended Broad, Combahee, Ashpoo, Dawho, and North Edisto Rivers. They held Pocotaligo, Tullifinny, Wappoo, John's Island, James Island, Secessionville and Légareville. They occupied the earthworks at Winyaw and Bulls bays, and the necklace of formidable forts around Charleston.

The Charleston and Savannah Railroad was guarded at cuts, trestles and bridges by veteran soldiers of undaunted courage. The railroads between the Allegheny range and the coast still preserved the lines of communication between the divisions of the Confederate army.

Thus the Union army and navy faced the Confederate camps and forts along the coast, and threatened the two principal cities of the South. Wilmington, the great entrepôt for blockade-runners, which General R. E. Lee said, "Must be held or the army cannot live," was menaced at Fort Fisher, and Richmond was closely besieged.

The common people and the soldiers of both sections were tired of war and its calamities and horrors, and a great yearning for peace spread over the land, in '64. The North was staggering under financial burdens; and politicians and

conspirators were scheming against the leaders of the two services and of the Government.

The South was in financial distress, unable to pay her soldiers, or to feed and clothe them. They were shoeless, ragged and famished. Many died from exposure without blankets or tents—these had been used for bandages, or blown into tatters by the wintry wind. There were no medicines for climatic diseases. Men could not be enlisted to replace those lost by desertion and death. The Nashville had been destroyed in Ossabaw Sound by the guns of the Montauk; and the ram Atlanta had been captured in Wassaw Sound by Erickson's monitors. The Confederates could illy spare these vessels from their vanishing navy, but the sinking of the Keokuk, and the Housatonic, of the Charleston fleet, more than offset their financial loss. The Florida had been seized in Bahia, and sunk at Hampton Roads. The Alabama had been destroyed by the Kearsarge, off the coast of France. The ironclad Albemarle had been torpedoed by Cushing, at Plymouth, N. C. The Shenandoah had gone to the Pacific to burn whale-ships. Sheridan had scattered Early's army and ravaged the Shenandoah Valley. Mobile had surren-

dered to Farragut. Sumter was in rocky ruins. Sherman had burned Atlanta, and his army was marching no one knew whither. Vain was the death of Lieutenant Pelot and his daring capture of the U. S. S. Water Witch, and the brilliant victory of Finnegin, at Olustee. The Confederacy was dying, and her people knew it. The South longed for peace without dishonor; but they wished the fruits of victory which they could not win; which meant recognition of the right to secede, and to be an independent nation.

The Nautilus was to be a part of the naval and military cordon, which was slowly strangling the Confederacy; and Careswell gloried in being an actor in a tragedy that was being played before the world.

The Nautilus arrived the third day and anchored among the fleet off Charleston. Captain Preston reported to Admiral Dahlgren, and received orders to proceed to St. Helena Sound, and to co-operate with the Winona in blockading and harassing the enemy.

Eager eyes scanned the ships and shore. Colonel Shaw and General Strong had died upon the ramparts of Fort Wagner; and the Ironclads and the Battalions had restored Morris Island to

the Union, but battered Sumter still flew the flag of Dixie. A line of U. S. men-of-war extended north and south; boats and tugs moved rapidly among them; turreted monitors and the case-mated Ironsides lay close in to Folly Island. Two ironclads on picket duty lay in the mouth of the harbor between Sumter and Moultrie, and these forts exchanged occasional shots with them, and with Battery Gregg on Cummins' Point. The "Swamp Angel," a heavy Parrot gun beyond Fort Wagner, fired screaming shells frequently at St. Michael's Church steeple in the heart of Charleston. A Whitworth gun in Moultrie retaliated by firing shell down Morris Island to interrupt the company drills of Union soldiers. The buildings of the hated city shone through the mist like mother of pearl. The scene was like a Turner picture—softened by yellow haze—but the opposing flags snapping in the breeze, and the men in bombproofs and clanging turrets, told that war prevailed and Death was abroad.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"What sheeted ghost is wandering through the storm?"

The Nautilus sailed up the coast and anchored next day in St. Helena Sound near the Winona. The beautiful bay receives many rivers between the Broad and the South Edisto, and the main land between them was vigorously defended by large forces of Confederates. Grahamville, Pocotaligo, and John's Island, repelled all attacks upon the railroad.

Tar Bluff Fort, on the left bank of the Combahee River, prevented its hostile navigation, and General Foster asked the navy to feel its strength. Two armed cutters entered the river at dark. Careswell led the expedition, with Ensign Shafer in the second boat. They were hailed and fired at by a sentinel on the fort, as they rowed up the middle of the river. Then shell roared over

the boats and exploded harmlessly in the marshes beyond.

"Bend to your oars, men, we will soon be past!" said Careswell sharply, and the boats were soon hidden in the gloom of the forest shadows. They rested a while, then floated unseen down the river and landed near a road, which ran along the bank. The firing had revealed four heavy guns, but the officers were not satisfied. Careswell proposed to attack the fort from the rear. He had twenty-six men, armed with Sharpe's carbines and Colt's revolvers, eager for the adventure. Shafer demurred; his orders were to co-operate in exploring the river, and in determining the strength of the fort, and beyond them, he would not go. Careswell took ten men and approached the fort near enough to count four guns. He saw many soldiers about the camp-fire, and recognized an attack with his force would be a desperate undertaking.

A group of slave cabins was visited on the return march; and a frightened negro confirmed the number of guns, and told of a garrison of fifty men. He rejoiced that the Yankees had arrived, and promised to keep the raid secret. The pickets were coming in, when there was a

challenge and a shot up the road. The sailors were deployed and the pickets retired laughing, followed by a dozen negroes, men, women and children, dressed in ragged garments, and loaded with household goods of their masters. They were fugitives whom none pursued, fleeing to the Yankees for freedom. They were directed to seek the shore opposite the ships; and a number were permitted to go in the boats, which were rowed cautiously down the Combahee, keeping a sharp lookout for the enemy.

The Nautilus sailed next day for Murrell's Inlet, destroyed salt-works along shore, shelled a beached blockade-runner, and sent a landing party to examine her. A cavalry force came over from Georgetown and attacked the two boats' crews, which had a desperate time getting off through the surf, and had one man seriously wounded in the fight.

A dispatch came in a few days from Dahlgren, ordering the Nautilus to the St. John's River. She went from Mayport to Pilatka, shelled the banks, protected Colonel Marple's small force at Magnolia, and scared the Regulators into inactivity. The steamer Maple Leaf had been sunk by a torpedo; the yacht America lay on the

bottom in a western cove, and Black Point, where Lieutenant Sproston had been shot, and the rebel Huston captured, sheltered a few bush-whackers.

Surgeon McMasters and Engineer Phillis were rowing to an orange plantation above the Point, when they looked into the muzzles of a dozen rifles and were ordered to come on shore. They were marched fifteen miles through swamps and hummocks to General Finnegin's camp, where they were well treated, and finally released, because a flag-of-truce was out, the morning of their capture, from General Hatch, at Jacksonville. The armistice for exchange of prisoners saved them, and they came back to the ship proud, hungry, and almost shoeless.

Two armed boats left the Nautilus one night to co-operate with negro soldiers from Jacksonville, in order to surprise and capture some sharpshooters on Black Point. The negroes were shot, or driven into the river and drowned, and the boats retired under a heavy fire.

The Regulators slept at B's plantation, and Careswell went with a force of blue-jackets to capture them. The house was surrounded, searched, and one prisoner taken. He personated

a sick woman, with a nightcap and a cough, and was in bed with trousers and boots. It was, perhaps, fortunate for both parties that the Regulators had gone that night to the Finnegin encampment.

"You will be kind to Benny, won't you, Lieutenant?" asked the prisoner's mother.

"As kind as he has been to us at Black Point," replied Careswell, as he marched his men away. Benny should have been shot as an irregular, but he was sent to Fort Lafayette.

Jacksonville was Army Headquarters, and the squalid little city was full of negroes, crackers, deserters, paroled prisoners, sailors, soldiers, school-teachers, philanthropists and citizens. Card-parties, dinner-parties, balls, rides, and boat-excursions, relieved the tedium of military drills and naval maneuvers. If an officer slid under a table, slept in a garden, fought with a sentinel, over-stayed his leave, or reported half-seas-over, nothing serious followed, since many were culpable and the blameless were prudent. The officers of the Nautilus had begun to enjoy the social festivities of the Department, when the ship sailed by order of the admiral for Ossabaw Sound. She anchored in the mouth of

the Ogeechee River, and co-operated with other vessels in sounding the channels, removing obstructions, dragging for torpedoes, and shelling Fort McAllister.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Say, pilot, what this fort may be,
Whose sentinels look down
From moated walls that show the sea
Their deep embrasure's frown?"

On November 24, Admiral Dahlgren had been requested by the Navy Department to assist General Sherman, as it was supposed his army was approaching the coast. November 25, Dahlgren wrote in his diary, "Sherman coming like a thunderbolt and retribution seemed nigh." Early in December, Dahlgren co-operated with General Foster and his troops in an expedition against Grahamville and the Tullifinny River country to destroy the railroad, divert troops from Savannah, and thereby assist Sherman. December 9, a Confederate deserter brought news to Foster that Sherman was within fifteen miles of Savannah. On December 12, Foster heard from rebel sources that Sherman's army had arrived behind the city.

December 9, Dahlgren had sent the steamers

Dandelion and Harvest Moon to St. Simons Sound, and the sloop-of-war South Carolina followed next day. He left St. Helena Sound and went to Port Royal, December 11, and received reports of heavy cannonading up river behind Savannah. The next morning, December 12, General Foster brought Captain Duncan (a scout) on board the Flagship Philadelphia, who delivered a note from General O. O. Howard, in command of the right wing of Sherman's army, which read as follows:

"Headquarters Department Army of the Tennessee near Savannah Canal, Georgia, Dec. 9, 1864.

"To Commander of U. S. Naval Forces
in vicinity of Savannah, Ga.

"Sir.—We have met with perfect success thus far. Troops in fine spirits and nearby.

"Respectfully,
"O. O. Howard,
"Major General Commanding R. W. Army."

Captain Duncan and his two scouts in a frail skiff had found a way by night through sloughs, canals and canebrake to the blockaders.

Dahlgren ordered vessels, including the Iron-

clad Sagamon, to the mouth of the Savannah, anticipating a raid by Confederate Ironclads from up river, and started in the Harvest Moon for Ossabaw Sound, where he arrived next day, December 13, at 11 p. m. He boarded the U. S. S. Flag and learned of communication with Sherman by signals, and of the capture of Fort McAllister.

On the morning of December 13, a group of officers and signal-men had been descried upon the roof of Cheeves' Rice Mill, located upon the left bank of the Great Ogeechee River, by the crew of the U. S. Tug Dandelion, lying at a safe distance off the mouth of the river, in Ossabaw Sound.

"Who are you?" wigwagged the tug's signal-man to the group of strangers.

The answering signal was, "General Sherman," whereupon the man reading the good news forgot all discipline, swung his flag wildly and shouted, "Sherman has arrived! Sherman is safe! Hurrah! Sherman has marched through Georgia."

Officers and men cheered and swung their caps, and Captain Williamson ordered the signal, "Is Fort McAllister taken?"

"No; but it will be in a minute. Report to Flag," was the cheerful, confident answer, just as a shell passed over the mill from the fort.

The scouts had performed their perilous mission, and General Kilpatrick's Cavalry had gone south to Sunbury, in order to communicate with the blockaders in St. Catherine Sound.

The good news was signaled to the Flag and the Nautilus and caused great rejoicing; and the naval men saw the advance of the Union troops, leaping like frogs over the *cheveaux de frize* and the parapet, the glitter of arms, the flashes of fire and clouds of smoke, and heard above the rattle of musketry fire the shouts of the combatants and the roar of cannon. The brave defenders of the fort fought furiously, and covered the approaches and esplanade with wounded and dead; but they were outnumbered by the veterans of Chattanooga and Atlanta, and General Hazen added more glory to the right wing of the army by hoisting the Union colors above the fortress, where the flag of Dixie had so long waved in defiance.

After the battle, General Sherman crossed the Ogeechee in a leaky skiff to Fort McAllister, congratulated the soldiers and General Hazen,

boarded the Dandelion and wrote a letter to Dahlgren, and returned to the fort for the night. The next morning, he went on board General Foster's steamer and was soon joined by Admiral Dahlgren.

Dahlgren had left at midnight for Wassaw Sound, and, December 14, encountered General Foster, in the army steamer, having General Sherman on board. Thus the two great commanders met, and Dahlgren received the letter written by Sherman the previous evening on board the Dandelion, telling of the storming of McAllister by General Hazen, asking that rations be sent up the Ogeechee to King's Bridge, requesting Parrot siege guns and ammunition, and declaring he had possession of the river and roads above the city, and "Savannah is our game. Let the authorities know that my army is fat and happy and in fine order, having eaten all the turkeys, chickens, sweet potatoes, etc., of Georgia."

The exciting. convivial, happy meeting of Captain Williamson, General Foster, Admiral Dahlgren and General Sherman in the army transport's cabin can be better imagined than described. Experiences were exchanged, the

latest war news discussed, and agreements made for prosecuting the campaign by land and water. Next day, Foster returned to Hilton Head, Sherman to his army, and Dahlgren to his temporary flagship, the Harvest Moon, in Ossabaw Sound.

On December 19, Sherman joined Dahlgren and they went to Port Royal to confer with Foster about pushing the advance at Tullifinny, and, on the way back, the steamer ran aground near Wassaw Sound. The great commanders proceeded to Ossabaw in the ship's cutter, where they met, December 21, an army tug with dispatches to Sherman, stating the army was advancing, and Savannah had been abandoned the night of December 20. Sherman immediately rejoined the army, and Dahlgren went and examined Fort Beaulieu and Fort Rosedew, great fortifications below Savannah, which had been deserted by the Confederates.

Savannah had been closely invested in the rear by Sherman's army at and between the five causeways which led into it, but the long line of fortifications and the 250 heavy guns of the city had halted it. Destitute of great siege guns. Sherman could not attack without great loss of

life, and he had settled down to a siege of starvation to continue until guns should arrive or Hardee should yield, having sent a flag-of-truce, December 17, demanding a surrender.

General Hardee had only 15,000 men, scattered thinly along front and rear of his lengthy line of defences, but he refused to surrender, and continued to resist with desperate courage all attacks that were made by the enthusiastic soldiers.

General Geary's Division of the Twentieth Corps, of the left wing, commanded by General Slocum, was pressing forward the night of December 20, when Colonel Willson's regiment encountered a committee of citizens, headed by Mayor Arnold, who informed the officers that General Hardee and his army had crossed the river on pontoons and left the city defenceless, and he desired to surrender it to the Union commander. General Geary's Division marched into Savannah and took formal possession, the 21st, and established headquarters in a bank. General Sherman and the remainder of the army arrived the 22nd, manned the fortifications around the city, and opened the river to the Navy.

There were many forts about Savannah.

These were Beaulieu, Rosedew, White Bluff, Bonaventure, Tatnall, Boggs, Thunderbolt, Causten's Bluff, Green Island, Pulaski, Jackson, and others unnamed. These fortifications had been built according to scientific plans; they contained the best and heaviest artillery, and required only a sufficient number of men to make the city impregnable. Trained artillerymen were many in the Confederacy, in '64, but General Hardee could not defend the city with the few he had. He destroyed materials of war and Commander Tatnall's half-finished ironclads; crossed the Savannah on pontoons, and spared the metropolis of Georgia the horrors of a bombardment.

The Nautilus steamed into Port Royal the day Savannah was occupied by the Union troops.

There was great excitement in town and fleet, when a dispatch-boat brought news of Sherman's arrival upon the coast. The fine harbor that could hold the navies of the world became a scene of great activity. Signals were made from ship to ship and shore; boats went in many directions; tugs and transports got up steam, and the band of the flagship and the one at the fort played patriotic airs.

CHAPTER XX.

"So pass'd that pageant. Ere another came,
The visionary scene was wrapped in smoke,
* * * * * *
For War a new and dreadful language spoke."

SHERMAN and his tired veterans rested and recuperated a month in the city they had so gallantly won.

The military and naval cordon was drawn closer about the hated city, where treason had been hatched and secession baptized in the blood of the loyal defenders of Sumpter.

The month of January was full of activity and war. The monitor Patapsco was sunk by a torpedo; the gunboat Dia Ching got aground in the Combahee and fought the fort on Tar Bluff seven hours, when she was set on fire and abandoned; Fort Fisher was stormed, and Wilmington, the only remaining entrepôt of the Confederacy, surrendered.

General Sherman and his troops left Savannah in care of General Foster, February 1st, and, crossing the Savannah on pontoons, marched away to the north, and received, the 17th, the surrender of Columbia; Hampton with the cavalry, having discreetly retired towards North Carolina.

Combined attacks by the navy and army were made at Stono River, Georgetown, Bulls Bay, and Pocotaligo; the Charleston and Gulf Railroad was seized, and the bridges on the Tullifinny and Coosawhatchie rivers were guarded. Admiral Dahlgren was at Bulls Bay the 16th, where gunboats were shelling the fort, and 1500 troops were ready to land. He went the same day to Stono, saw great fires in the fated city, and heard rumors that Charleston was being evacuated. On the 17th, the attacks were continued at Bulls Bay in order to cut the railroad north, and at Stono, to force surrender of Fort Pringle; and the Cummins Point Fort (Battery Gregg) and two monitors fired all day and all night at Sumter and Moultrie. Cautious advances next morning (the 18th) found empty forts and spiked cannon.

The city of Charleston had been abandoned

by Generals Beauregard and Hardee, who had escaped by the railroad past Bulls Bay and taken its brave defenders with the main army. The retreat was skilfully planned and perfectly executed. The guiding lanterns on Sumter and Saint Michael were not lighted. The Swamp Angel was silent. Battery Bee had lost its sting. The Confederate ironclads, Ashley, Chicora, Charleston and Palmetto State lay uninjured in the harbor. Union flags waved over the deserted fortifications, and appeared at several places in Charleston. Troops were moved rapidly behind the breastworks, which they had so long assailed in front. The fires in cotton and warehouses were extinguished. General Gilmore received the surrender of the city from the disheartened mayor, and established martial law. Companies and regiments marched jauntily through the deserted streets and occupied buildings and outposts. Admiral Dahlgren and his staff passed the harbor obstructions safely in a small steamer, and co-operated with Gilmore in establishing order along the water front.

But neither man had conquered the city. It was rendered untenable by the Confederates, as General Sherman had destroyed its communica-

tions with Columbia and thus threatened it with starvation.

The Union soldiers and sailors were wild with delight at the capture of the traitor's nest; ships and camps were scenes of joyous festivity, and night was made glorious by music and fireworks. Every one believed the Confederacy had received a mortal wound, and peace would soon be proclaimed.

"I hope you are satisfied with being in the thick of the fray, Careswell," remarked Lieutenant Bloss at the evening smoke-talk on board the Nautilus after his return from the Stono fight.

"I am not only contented, but absolutely happy. We learned how to fight at Annapolis, but the real thing is tamer than our drilling under Lockwood and Luce."

Sherman's veterans continued their triumphant march through the Confederacy by way of Fayetteville and Goldsboro to assail Lee in the rear and join Grant's army in Virginia. Hardee's army disputed the advance at Averysboro, but was defeated. Hampton's Cavalry, supported by infantry, attacked the Federals at Bentonville with such desperate courage, that they won a partial victory and their last battle.

The Union army rallied and advanced through Raleigh to the beautiful country beyond it, where the Southern army had retreated and united its corps for a last desperate battle, under the command of General Joe Johnston, now restored to favor, and wily and resourceful as usual.

Coincident with Sherman's advance, many supply vessels and men-of-war rendezvoused near Beaufort, North Carolina, to render assistance to his army should he meet with disaster, or decide to transport his troops by water to Virginia. The ninety-six vessels off Charleston and the numerous blockaders all along the coast had little to do, and were gradually reduced in number and ordered home, although the blockade was strictly maintained at every place. Admiral Dahlgren continued to stamp out the embers of rebellion, as at Georgetown, in March, where six torpedo boats and ironclads were captured, and his flagship Harvest Moon was blown up by a torpedo. Disloyal gossip did not swerve this noble man from serving his country conscientiously, but his feelings were hurt and his health suffered through the malign influence of Northern journals, which constantly attacked his motives and character. New Orleans and Mo-

bile were easily assailable, but Charleston was impregnable from the sea side. Dahlgren could not take it with his fleet, and Gilmore and his army would not assist him properly in combined movements.

Richmond yielded at last to greatly superior forces, superbly armed and equipped, because of the lack of food, ammunition and men; and Grant's relentless army marched by the light of the burning buildings through and around the city; arrested the rioting, robbery and conflagration, and faced the shattered, suffering army of Lee on the fields by the Appomattox. The able leader of the "Lost Cause" met the magnanimous general of the American Union, and the terrible war was ended.

General Johnston, wily and shrewd, inveigled the generous Sherman into terms of surrender, which were rejected by Grant and Lincoln because they included political concessions that the Union officer had no right to grant. But they were soon amended; Sherman, in the meantime, issued 250,000 army rations to the starving Southern army; Johnston disbanded his forces, and the men scattered to their homes.

Despatches brought soon the glorious news of

victory to the squadron; the blockade was relaxed, and navy and army rejoiced in the convivial and pyrotechnical ways known to the services. The Union flag waved everywhere now, except in Texas, and on the Pacific Ocean, where news of the surrender traveled slowly, men were incredulous, and some leaders obstinate. The last vessel of the Confederate Navy, the Shenandoah, continued to cruise and burn whalers for months after the declaration of peace, and Captain Waddell, notified at last by a British vessel, made the long voyage to Liverpool in the ship without a flag or a country, a pirate in fact, and surrendered to the British Government.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
* * * * * *
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose is one."

A large mail was delivered to the Nautilus, containing astonishing news. Ashton received promotion to lieutenant and said, "I am going to marry Jean for the beautiful letters which she has written to me." Lieutenant Long had resigned from the army, married Miss Good, and was going into business in Jacksonville. Careswell received the wedding cards of Colonel Gordon and Madam Fontana, and a note from the lady, asking him to break the news gently to Lieutenant Bloss. She said they were soon going to Charleston, where she owned considerable property, and Miss Montague was to accompany them, as she had not been herself since the

departure of the Nautilus. They would be pleased to see him at the Charleston Hotel after May 1st.

Careswell's heart lost a beat in reading the last phrases of the lilac-scented missive, and a wave of affectionate remembrance of Key West rushed through his mind. He opened carelessly a long official envelope from the admiral, which he supposed was an answer to an application for leave of absence, and read,

"In consequence of the special recommendation of your commanding officer, Captain Amasa Preston, you are hereby promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander, and you will report for examination, on arrival of your ship at New York, to the Commandant of the Navy Yard."

"Glory hallelujah! Now I can afford the luxury of a wife," he said to himself, and went into the wardroom and paid for the congratulations with champagne. The commission being duly wet, he told Bloss privately of the disloyalty and marriage of Madam, and the jilted lover immediately communicated the news to his messmates, and pretended to weep, as he repeated,

"'Twas ever thus in childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;

I never loved a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away."

He was chaffed and jeered at being cut out by an army man—an unusual occurrence in the navy—but it was evident he was not deeply grieved. "I will soon be out of my misery," said he; "I have just received leave for a month. I cannot remain for congratulations, but will speed north to get an ampler uniform and a more faithful woman."

The Nautilus went into Charleston and anchored near the city wharves, where shore leave was given the crew, and the officers had opportunity to examine the interior of forts and the destruction caused by their cannon.

News of the assassination of President Lincoln came one day to all like lightning from a clear sky. The lowest and the highest men of the ship wept, as they talked of the dastardly deed. Every one felt he had lost a dear friend, a beloved commander. His murder increased the loyalty and devotion of every Union man, and awoke the war spirit of the Nation, which had been going to sleep beneath a covering of charity.

The summer came a month earlier than the

almanac date, as it does in that semi-tropical climate, and Careswell met at the Charleston Hotel his warm-hearted friends from Key West.

"'See the conquering hero comes,'" was Colonel Gordon's greeting, as he met Careswell in the office about to send up his card.

"'The man who fights and runs away,' may apply to you, Colonel; you fought at Olustee and came away in a hurry. Now, you have abandoned Fort Taylor for a woman."

"Who would not, my lad, when she is the Queen of Beauty and of the Kingfishers? 'Beauty leads us by a single hair.'"

"I congratulate you. I suspected your design at the party, but I was not prepared for Bloss' early discomfiture."

"'Out of sight, out of mind,' I guess. Bloss should have proposed long ago, if he had any serious intentions. He is not a marrying kind. He thinks a bachelor is a lucky dog, and a benedict, a happy fellow."

"He is a jolly bachelor; we are sorry he has gone on leave of absence. He will probably not return."

"'Out of sight' has not been 'out of mind' in one case, my lad. Laura has been like a

frosted lily ever since your departure, and Mrs. Gordon is worried about her health."

"Miss Montague—Laura! She care for me?"

"Of course; you are blind as a bat. You and she were like two turtle doves, and every one was surprised when you parted without an Understanding. She was your choice of all the naval lassies. Her father was an English cotton-broker, at New Orleans; and her mother, a Creole of that city's charming society—both died before the war. She has a moderate income—and is a darling—Madam's niece, and now mine, you know."

Careswell had felt considerable affectionate interest in Laura and thought her adorable; but when in the Gulf Squadron, he was absorbed by his professional duties, ambitious for promotion, and too proud to ask any lady to grub along on the poor pay of a lieutenant. The colonel's blunt presentation of facts and the assertion that Laura cared for him, shocked him exceedingly, and awoke reminiscences of Key West, which started his heart beating faster and convinced him it might be true. He was so disturbed by a rush of emotions, that he remained thoughtful

and silent, until the colonel took his arm and said, "Let us go to my private parlor and see the ladies."

Mrs. Gordon received him with a gentle courtesy and the motherly interest always manifested at Key West; she complimented his appearance, laughed over his recital of Bloss' comments, inquired about other friends, and, when he began to tell the part the Nautilus had taken in the capture of Savannah and Charleston, arose and said, "Excuse me a moment, there is another person, who would like to hear your story; Laura is with us."

Careswell blushed and stammered, "The colonel told me; I am very glad;" as she looked kindly and earnestly into his honest eyes.

Madam opened the door of an adjoining room and a lady entered. Careswell arose and looked at her. Could it be possible there was a mistake? What fairy was this crossing the room? Tall, willowy, graceful as a gazelle; draped in a silvery cloud that covered a perfect form, while it permitted glimpses of beautiful symmetry; a noble head, crowned with dark-brown hair, a diamond sparkling above the brow. Stray ringlets clustered about little, shell-like ears of re-

finement. The classic features indicated delicacy, sentiment and dignity. Her brown eyes, deep, kind and thoughtful, opened wide with pleased expectation. The dimpled chin, retracted a little, added something of hauteur to the gracefully poised head. The pink lips curved in a Cupid's bow, and dimples formed with the welcoming smile of the beautiful maiden, as she approached him.

He stood oblivious to his surroundings, astonished at her saintly beauty, and bowed low as she drew near him. Then he grasped her timid, little hand held out to him, and said, "Miss Montague! Is it indeed you? I thought an angel was floating across the room. I am so glad to see you again."

Laura had been lily white, but his compliment and greeting sent a blush over her lovely face, and she trembled, as she murmured, "How do you do, Lieutenant Careswell? It is always pleasant to meet old friends again. I hope you are quite well."

They stood a few moments speechless, agitated and confused, with hands clasped, looking in each other's eyes, as if unable to think or to move. Laura gently withdrew her hand and

sank down upon a divan at Madam's side, and Careswell drew a long breath, settled into an armchair and looked at Madam.

She and her husband had watched the meeting closely, and they were smiling and nodding and very happy about something. She relieved the embarrassment of the younger people and broke the silence, saying, "Lieutenant Careswell was about to tell us his adventures and the movements of the Nautilus, during the tedious months since he left the Key, when I called you, Laura; I knew you would be interested in the recital."

"Thank you for your thoughtfulness, Auntie," was the response, and she looked at Careswell with timid expectancy.

He gave a history of the cruise and of the exploits of his brother officers, declaring he had had only a few skirmishes with the Confederates. The colonel rebuked his modesty by asking questions: "Were not Hatch's negro soldiers killed, when you attacked Black Point? Were you caught in the surf by cavalry at Murrell's Inlet? Didn't you fight on the Stono and at Bulls Bay? Have you dodged shells and dragged for torpedoes at Charleston? You would have surprised

Tar Bluff in the rear, if your subordinate officer had not been a coward. We saw Captain Preston yesterday and he told us about it, and of your promotion. Tell things straight, my lad; you do not know how to blow your own horn."

"Nor do I wish to know, Colonel. There are too many braggarts in the services now. But Tar Bluff reminds me of an interesting experience on the Combahee, when returning to the ship." Then he told of the rescue of two young ladies from a raft in the river, their visits to Beaufort, their home in Savannah, and Madam became grave and Laura paled perceptibly.

"Quite a delightful adventure; your marriage to one of the girls would be a romantic climax to the story," remarked the colonel jocosely.

"Yes, but that will never occur," replied Careswell emphatically, blushing hotly over memory's sting.*

Madam was pleased; Laura was quite satisfied, and the colonel lifted his eyebrows. Careswell noticed that neither of the ladies made any objection to his patriotic speeches. Madam had

* See "Southern Buds and Sons of War," of which this is a sequel.

disclosed her sentiments by accepting the colonel, and Laura was free from sectionalism and in sympathy with the North. He experienced a freedom from contention and a restful pleasure that were like balm to his wounded spirit.

Day after day of delightful companionship followed this evening visit. They walked along Bay Street for the sea breeze and views of the forts and the ships; they went in a cutter and explored Battery Bee, Fort Moultrie and the ruined, world-renowned Sumter; they drove through the pines to famous Summerville; they visited the Magnolia Gardens and spent hours with the flowers and the poetry of life, and June startled them with orders to Captain Preston to report with the Nautilus at New York.

In the shade of a magnolia tree, surrounded by flowers and intoxicated by their perfume, Careswell and Laura sat upon a rustic bench, while their companions wandered among the paths.

"Our ship is ordered north, Miss Montague, and I must go with her and take my examination at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It is hard to leave this delightful climate, but harder to leave my friends—and you. You are the most beautiful

flower of the garden—and I want you. You were a lily a month ago; now, you are a pink carnation. It is my favorite flower; I love it—and you. Dear, precious girl, will you be my wife, and lend your beauty to adorn my home?"

Laura's head had drooped and the pink had yielded to the lily, with the first expression of desire, and, when Careswell with pretty compliments and ardent speech pressed his suit, she raised her head proudly, looked in his worshiping eyes, nestled her little hand in his and said, "I will be your wife, Harry, because I love you; I cannot live without you," and she let her head fall upon his breast to hide her blushes, and her lips rose to meet his ardent kiss of betrothal, as the tide rises toward the silver moon.

"Laura, my darling! You have made me very happy! Do you really give me this pretty hand without any conditions, Love?" asked he earnestly.

"Yes, dear; only you must love and cherish me always."

"I promise that with all my heart. I could never do otherwise, dearest. O, this is love eternal, when love meets love, and hearts beat in harmony. I have never really loved before, and

I bless you for awakening me to knowledge of a perfect love."

"Ahem! ahem!" recalled the lovers from their blissful trance, and they saw the colonel and his wife coming down the path. Madam put her arm around Laura and kissed her; the colonel shook Careswell's hand heartily and said, "I think Mrs. Gordon is a poor chaperon, don't you, sir?" Madam took the lieutenant's hand and patted it gently, gave him a radiant smile, and answered for him, "Some persons don't need one; young people should have a chance to be confidential."

CHAPTER XXII.

"Home, whispered in some foreign scene,
Sweetly it falls upon the ear;——"

The Nautilus was homeward bound, and the knowledge of it sent a joyous excitement throughout the ship, that caused the Jackies to man the yards, fill the lower rigging, and return lusty cheers in response to the cheering crews of the other ships of the S. A. Squadron.

Careswell had received his Key West friends, who had not been on board the Nautilus since the memorable night of the party, and had said farewell in the privacy of his own stateroom. Their rowboat had remained under the stern, where he talked with them through a gun-port until the whistles and orders, "All hands up anchor!" called him to his station, when he lifted his cap and rushed away. The parting was not to be for a long time. They would take the next steamer and follow him to New York, where

Madam would select Laura's trousseau and prepare for the wedding the last of the month. She believed it a true love match, and had every confidence in Careswell's honor, but she was not going to take any chances of sailors' fickleness or naval obstruction, where Laura's happiness was so seriously concerned.

The noble ship left the dilapidated, shabby city and the harbor ships behind her and pointed for the open sea. She sailed out between Sumter and Moultrie before a strong southwest breeze, and dipped her flag to the forts, which fluttered their flags up and down, as her crew cheered wildly. There was no restraining them; they were so glad to go home.

Careswell recalled to memory a song of his school days:

> "Our flag is there! Our flag is there!
> We'll hail it with three loud huzzas!
> Our flag is there! Our flag is there!
> Behold the glorious stripes and stars!"

and a nervous crinkle ran down his spine and tears filled his eyes.

Jack Tar doesn't generally care in what part of the world he cruises, if he has plenty of money and an occasional run on shore. But these Jack-

ies differed from the Black Ball liners, the old sea-dogs, of the merchant service, who spun yarns and mouthed tobacco quids. They had come from all parts of the North, leaving commerce, trades or professions, to fight for the preservation of the Union. They were going home to resume peaceful occupations, to live among friends with their loved ones, and anticipation and hope made them very happy. There was music and dancing every night, which relieved somewhat the tedium of the voyage.

Occasionally, the Nautilus would overhaul some merchant vessel, examine her papers and let her go on her way, because she belonged to a neutral nation, or to the United States. There were no prizes to be captured now. Or a cruiser would dart off the coast and halt the Nautilus with a gun, as she had stopped many another craft, find she was a national ship, bring on board a bag of letters for home, salute with the flag and return to her lonely station.

The Sunday Inspection of ship and crew was especially rigid the last time, because a good appearance must be made in port, but the sailors' clothes were faded, the officers' uniforms were threadbare, the brass buttons and gold lace were

tarnished, and a casual observer would have known the men were all veterans of the Civil War.

The crew was mustered aft at 9 a. m., the roll was called, the Executive read the *Articles of War,* the Paymaster gave selections from the *Episcopal Prayer Book,* and the Captain and the Executive inspected critically the personnel of the crew and every part of the ship. Only work necessary for running the course was required during the remainder of the day. Every one did what he pleased, overhauled his kit, repaired his clothes, played dominoes, wrote letters, smoked and yarned,—the usual manner of observing the Fourth Commandment in the United States Navy.

A New York pilot-boat was spoken Monday morning; a burly pilot came on board with pockets full of late newspapers; the course was laid for Sandy Hook; the Highland Lights were soon passed, and the Nautilus anchored before daylight off the Staten Island Quarantine Station. When the morning dawned, all eyes and hearts were gladdened by the green verdure and foliage, and the lovely villas and forts of the Narrows. The Quarantine Physician made a brief exami-

nation of the health of the ship; the anchor was weighed; the ship's signal number and the large ensign were hoisted, and she steamed slowly up the magnificent harbor and anchored off the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

How indescribable the feelings of a wanderer on his arrival in his native land! How the hearts of these heroes of the war swelled with pride and emotion, when they thought of the perils they had passed, and of the glory they had won by patriotic service for their country. No one can have a true conception of what love of country is, until he has been awhile away from it. And to think that any one should have tried to destroy the refuge of the oppressed, the home of freedom, the glorious United States of America!

The Nautilus was again at home, and everybody desired to step on the sacred soil, but there were formalities to be observed before these prisoners of the sea could be liberated. Captain Preston went in his gig and made an official visit to the Commodore of the Navy Yard. A salute of thirteen guns was fired from the howitzers. The sails were loosed, dried, unbent and stowed below deck. The booms were swung out

and the boats put overboard. The awnings were spread and the windsails hoisted in the hatchways. The yards were squared and all ropes hauled taut and coiled down. The decks were swept and the brass-work scoured, and the tired crew were glad to rest without the usual evening entertainment.

The next few days leave parties went about the two cities, gazed with delight at the splendor of the metropolis, and enjoyed again the pleasures of nineteenth century civilization. Orders came the second week to put the ship out of commission, preparatory to stripping and docking her. All hands were called to muster and the Captain made a farewell speech:

"Men of the Nautilus,—It is with sadness that I announce to you the time has come for parting. The Nautilus goes out of commission to-day. I thank you for your observance of regulations, your uniform good behavior, and your efficiency and courage. You have the proud consciousness of having served your country in her time of danger, and she will reward you for your patriotism. I wish you success and happiness in life. I will always be glad to hear of your welfare.

"To you, my faithful officers, I owe much. You have ably performed the arduous duties required of you, and been industrious, zealous and brave throughout our memorable cruise. Such conduct will bring reward in consciousness of duty well done, and in deserved promotion. The Naval Examining Board is in session. I will ever be ready to advance your interests. I trust the ties of affection between us will endure forever. Farewell, my shipmates, Farewell!"

"Three cheers for Captain Preston!" shouted Mr. Lawson, as he sprang upon a gun-carriage and swung his cap. Loud huzzas burst from all throats and echoed across the river.

"Three cheers for the good ship Nautilus!" he cried, and they rent the very heavens.

"And don't ye fergit the best Executive in the wurld, lads," shouted Brenneman, as he jumped upon a gun carriage.

The great crew cheered until Lawson held up his hand and said: "Shipmates, I thank you." Tears were in his voice and eyes.

"Pipe down!" he said to the Boatswain; the shrill whistles sounded and the men scattered about the decks. At meridian, the long naval pennant and the ensign fluttered down, and the

official life of the Nautilus for the cruise was ended.

The ship was warped to the dock and delivered to the shipkeepers; the crew was transferred to the Receiving-ship North Carolina, and the officers went to their hotels. A week later, the beautiful vessel was a dismantled, disordered hulk. The hatches were off and the hull empty; the anchors and guns were on the dock; the yards and topmasts were down and landed, and the rigging was lying in coils about the deck. She was ready to enter the dry-dock and have her clipper hull prepared for again buffeting the boisterous seas.

In an eayleeyrie among the cliffs and trees that fringed the sky-line and cast shadows upon the western currents of the Hudson, at Cozzen's Hotel, Careswell and Laura, Col. Gordon and Madam, were honeymooning among jolly people where,

> "Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
> And all went merry as a marriage bell."

"So Long."

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